

GET MORE
OUT OF LIFE

Catherine Groves

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OUT OF LIFE

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BY

CATHERINE GROVES

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION
DURHAM, N. C.

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TO MY PARENTS

ERNEST R. and GLADYS H. GROVES

In whose footsteps I attempt
to follow

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Preface

EVERYONE finds obstacles in his path from time to time and has his own brand of trouble to endure. Because problems are so universal, we all need to learn how to prevent those that are not inevitable and cope with those that are, and we need to know where to find help when life for us becomes difficult.

This book has been written in the hope that the information it contains will enable the reader to understand better some of the forces back of human behavior. Such understanding, especially about ourselves, is necessary if we are to make the most of our lives.

All illustrative situations in the following chapters have been fictionized. Although the examples given represent the sort of problems brought to a family counselor, not one is meant as a description of any specific situation.

C. G.

Marriage and Family Council, Inc.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Introduction

THIS little book on how to GET MORE OUT OF LIFE as it applies to human relationships is strongly reminiscent of the question which the dynamic Franklin Henry Giddings used to emphasize as fundamental. This question could be variedly worded, but, in general, it was something like this: "What else will happen or is likely to happen if certain actions are taken or words spoken or emotions released?"

The mistakes and tragedies of family relationships as they come to the attention of family counselors are also reminiscent of the great old Biblical sentiment of "How often would I and ye would not."

In all too many cases mistakes and handicaps come about by default rather than intention; by lack of thought and thoughtfulness; by lack of skilled inquiry and planning; by failure to look at all of the factors harmoniously; and by failure to take advantage of the help that is offered.

One of the sad things from the viewpoint of both the student and practitioner in the field of human relationships is the failure to give the same sort of skill, sympathy, and compassion to those who are nervously or mentally sick as we give to those who are physically ill or who have been victims of physical accident.

If somehow in the gradual development and maturing of skills in the professional work of helping people in trouble, we could insure that there would be those every-

where prepared and ready to take care of an emergency, society would have gone a long way on and up toward its supreme human goals.

This little volume by a skilled counselor as motivation, as tool, as guide, and as stimuli both to the practitioner, and to all those who may need help, is an excellent unit in the rapidly increasing body of knowledge and practice in this field.

HOWARD W. ODUM

University of North Carolina

September 20, 1941

CHAPTER I

Why This Book?

WHEN Sue and Fred get in a heated argument at the breakfast table over the expenditure of their joint income, what happens? Perhaps the trouble is merely that they each got out of the wrong side of the bed that morning, and by night the whole thing will have blown over. Perhaps, on the other hand, things are said by each that the other is never quite able to forget; perhaps they know that only on the surface is the outburst caused by the disagreement over money and that the real difficulty is a smoldering antagonism between them that erupts at the slightest excuse.

If this last explanation is the correct one, how do they set about solving their problem? Does each go after re-enforcements, Sue getting her mother to back her up in her charges that Fred is being unfair, Fred getting his cronies to agree with him that his wife is extravagant?

Would this way of handling their difficulty be expected to improve the relationship between them? Undoubtedly, both Fred and Sue would agree in a calm moment that it would not. Yet perhaps they do not know what else to do. They may love each other deeply, and still not be able to

find the real cause of their sudden hostilities. In spite of the best of intentions, every time they decide to discuss things together rationally they may find that they end up in a few minutes facing each other in red-faced anger and saying cutting things to each other.

If so, it would seem that they are already in danger of digging an unbridgeable chasm between them. Unless they are able to get help, they may understandably end up in a divorce court or live out their lives as legally wedded partners who have nothing in common but their surname.

The sad thing is that they may not know where to seek the expert help that might save their marriage, or may not understand that the sooner such help is sought the more chance there is of success, since a love that has been torn to tatters is difficult, if not impossible, to patch up again.

Fred and Sue would know what to do if one of them was ill. They know the symptoms of physical sickness and where a doctor can be found. However, faced with a problem such as the breakdown of their marriage, with all the unhappiness involved, they may not either recognize the early symptoms or think to seek expert counsel.

Indeed, there are some people still who are surprised to learn that family counseling has become a profession. Of course, there have always been people in certain communities to whom others turned when in trouble. Often these were ministers or doctors; sometimes it was just a woman with an unusual knack of comforting the sore of soul. One hopes that the world will never be without many such persons.

The person who takes an unselfish interest in the troubles of his neighbors and gives them sound advice can help those

whose difficulties lie on the surface. Others need the aid of professional counselors.

The same thing is true, of course, as far as the practice of medicine is concerned. It was not so long ago, as history measures time, that sick people went to medicine men or took herb concoctions made by old crones in the neighborhood. Now we go to doctors—men who, having spent years in studying the human body and the way its ills can be cured, are now licensed as professional healers of the sick and are making this their lifetime job.

This does not mean that experience has no value. A woman who has successfully brought up a large number of children will be turned to for advice by the young mother who is uncertain as to the cause of her baby's fretfulness. Should the baby really be ill, however, the mother will want a doctor, and rightly so. The personal experience of one individual during his short lifetime could not possibly be wide enough to include all the knowledge that a physician needs to have; such knowledge is to be gained only from an intensive study of the fruits of the experience of hundreds of individuals.

Curing the sick of soul is as important for human happiness as curing the sick of body, and both involve more than good intentions mixed with common sense. A person may be born with the *qualities* that would make him a good doctor or a good counselor, but he cannot be *born* a doctor or counselor. In each instance, he has to master a science first; intuition must be based on knowledge.

That is why counseling has become a profession, a full-time job for those who have made an intensive study of the knowledge gained over a period of years by persons who

have tried various methods of helping people in trouble. Human beings find their lives out of kilter in so many different ways and for so many different reasons that aiding in their adjustment is as complex a field as healing the human body.

Because every human being differs from every other, it is not possible in a book to give solutions of individual problems. Both the physician and the counselor have to vary their methods to suit the particular situation.

Thus we could not tell Sue and Fred what they should do merely by listening to an account of their symptoms: the disagreements over money matters and the angry arguments. We would have to know much more, something about their personalities, their way of responding to situations, about their lifelong attitude toward money. Does Sue feel, without admitting the fact even to herself perhaps, that her husband has let her down, that married life is not so attractive as she had been led to expect? Or does Fred, perhaps, feel humiliated because his wife has continued to work after their marriage and in resentment has tried to make it seem her fault that they cannot get along on his salary? Or possibly Sue, believing that her family and friends think she married beneath her, has been overly anxious that Fred should rapidly increase his earning power in order to prove himself, in that respect at least, the equal of the husbands of her friends.

There are, of course, many other possible factors that will occur to the reader, making it evident that one cannot prescribe for human ills in general, since unhappiness is an individual thing. As long as people are human, they will

presumably have a certain amount of trouble of one kind or another. The tragic thing is that so many people endure for years or a lifetime unhappiness that is unnecessary. They do not know where to find persons whose business it is to help people with problems like theirs. Yet, in many instances, there are available counselors who can help the Freds and Sues, worried young people and troubled parents, upset wives and frantic husbands—in short, those who find life not what it might be.

The counselor may be a social worker, doctor, minister, teacher, lawyer, or simply a family counselor, and one of the purposes of this book is to give the reader an understanding of the kind of help he can expect from these various sources. In spite of the different backgrounds of those who practice counseling, there is a similarity of purpose evidenced when counselors from all over the country gather together at such meetings as those of the Conference on Conservation of Marriage and the Family or of The National Conference on Family Relations.

Of course, there is as yet no known cure for some of the ills of the human spirit, but difficulties can be alleviated much more often than most people realize, if the troubled person just knows where to turn for aid.

CHAPTER II

Are You Satisfied with Your Life?

WILLIAM, Wade, Walter, and Webster play golf together every pleasant Sunday afternoon. To all appearances, they are four middle-class, middle-aged businessmen out for their weekly exercise. They always seem to be enjoying themselves, and one would expect them to be fairly well satisfied with their lot in life.

Indeed, some of their closest friends would have been surprised to learn the truth. Each carried deep within him a feeling of futility, the belief that he had been cheated out of the best that life had to offer. Each continued to play the expected role in life, to do his daily work, because he thought it was his duty to do so, even though convinced that he would never obtain much real enjoyment out of his existence.

Probably every human being ever born on this earth has had periods, long or short, when he felt this way; and it would obviously be ridiculous to expect anybody to be happy every minute. But it seems a criminal waste of the gift of life and consciousness bestowed upon mankind for any person to go through adulthood feeling this way most of the time. In addition, it is almost always unnecessary, if

the person really wants to get more fun out of living. Of course, those who enjoy being miserable—and there are more of these than we sometimes realize—will not willingly accept any improvement in their lot.

It is not that contentment in itself is or should be the aim of mankind. Most of the world's progress has been brought about by people who were anything but contented with things as they found them. Contentment is the reward of those who, feeling that they have put up a good fight, retire from the struggle satisfied. It may be the right of the aged, but it is not a term to be applied to those still in the midst of the battle, no matter how much joy they may gain in the fighting.

The important thing is whether a person finds life well worth while most of the time. Does he, after that first painful effort to step forth from the comfort of his bed, look forward with enthusiasm to what the day may bring? Or, at least, does he do so five days out of the seven? Is he well enough satisfied with the life he is leading so that, at the moment, he can think of nobody with whom he would voluntarily change places, if, by so doing, he would have to take over the other's existence in its entirety?

Another way of asking the question is whether, if there be other planets on which there is human life, he is still glad that he is on this one. Does he, in spite of the horror that any person must feel about the way in which many of the fruits of civilization are being put to use, find this an exciting period in history in which to be alive?

When people answer "No" to these questions, they usually give one of the following reasons for their dissatisfactions: They do not have enough money; they married the

wrong person; nobody could be happy who had to hold down their job; or they have some lack (physical disability or educational disadvantages) that blocks them in their chosen line of endeavor.

† Thus it is that William thinks that he would be leading an ideal existence if only he could double his income. He believes this in spite of the fact that he would still have the same uncongenial wife he now has and that he cannot show how money could remove many of those things that have caused his unhappiness.

† Wade blames everything on his wife. If Helen were only different, everything would be fine. He reasons this way even though she is his third wife and the other two suited him no better.

† Walter works in a bank, where his chance of promotion is practically nonexistent. It seems to him that this fact should make anybody who knows the situation think it noble of him to continue to do his work efficiently and face the world with a smile. Yet he has made no effort to find other employment and would be hard put to give any concrete examples of the way his life would be materially improved, even though he could write "Fourth Vice-president" after his name.

† Some years ago, Webster learned that the measles he had had as a child had permanently injured his heart. He was told that, if he took proper care of himself, he would probably outlive many of his contemporaries. Golf was the most strenuous exercise he was allowed to engage in, and eighteen holes were all that he could play in one day. When he had to leave the others, who would play for another hour or so, he thought of himself as bearing up bravely under the great-

est tragedy that a man could face. Yet the facts were that he had to give up very few of the things he really wanted to do; on the other hand, his disability enabled him gracefully to avoid doing many things he preferred not to do.

Anybody who knew any one of these four men well would be able to see that he was blaming something outside himself for the unhappiness that was actually due to some inner discord. By putting the blame on something beyond his control, each was able to close his eyes to the need of analyzing his own attitude toward life and trying to do something about it. It is easy to catch others at this trick, but very hard to catch ourselves.

To begin with, it can be admitted that practically everyone could use a great deal more money than he has. Money increases people's comfort, enables them to get more of the things they would like to have, and to do more of the things they would like to do.

To state that the desire for additional income is valid and almost universal, however, is not to say that it is actually the cause of as much dissatisfaction with life as is commonly thought. Nothing is more apparent than that happiness does not increase in direct ratio to a person's financial means. There is as yet no scientific way of measuring enjoyment of life, but it is obvious that there are many happy people who are poor, many unhappy ones who are rich.

If a person is unable to feed his family, and his children have the beaten look of half-starved children, and he faces one eviction after another, then lack of money could understandably be his tragedy. As long, however, as a person has sufficient food and clothing and a shelter over his head, it is questionable whether his dissatisfaction with life is entirely

due to lack of material means, although this lack may be the cause of many of his worries and some of his defeats.

Theoretically, most of us know that wealth and happiness are not synonymous; but when it comes to our own practical problems, it is all too easy to think that, if we just had the money, we would do thus and so, and everything would be smooth sailing. There are few of us destined to get so rich that we ourselves regard it as ridiculous to wish for more money, and so our pretense that the lack of money is the cause of all our woes is usually a lifelong one. We may even stick to this belief when the experience of others should show us our error.

It can be expected that most people will want to make all the money they honestly can. Money is important, and as long as it is the medium with which we exchange the labor of our hands or minds for all the many things we want, it will remain important. All-important, however, it should not be; nor should it be so basic to our way of life that a reduction of the amount we can obtain takes away all our zest for life.

William need not spend his life waiting for his income to double. He can make his life much more pleasant right now if he really desires to do so enough to work hard for a short time at the task of discovering the basis of his discontent within himself.

As for Wade's excuse, we can concede at once that few wives are perfect. If Helen had been perfect, she certainly would not have married Wade in the first place; in the second place, Wade would not have wanted to marry her.

Many people could certainly have done a better job of choosing a spouse than they did, but that in itself does not mean that everything that is wrong with their lives is due to

this fact alone. Too often, people tell themselves that, if only they had used more wisdom in choosing a mate, everything would have been all right; when, actually, what is needed is more wisdom in making the marriage they are involved in work out more satisfactorily. Wade has tried changing partners, but even though the third attempt is no more successful than the first, he is not willing to admit that the difficulty might lie with him.

Instead of breaking one marriage tie only to form another, with all the heartbreak that this entails, the intelligent thing to do is to put all one's effort into making the present marriage work. After all, the experience of thousands of people has shown that it is possible to be happy though married, even if the marriage is not a perfect one. In fact, it may be doubted whether the perfect marriage ever existed, except in the minds of the authors of fiction.

It is certainly valid reasoning to state that an uncongenial occupation takes much of the joy out of life. Most of us spend the major portion of our waking hours working at the occupation that gives us our living. If we can get no satisfaction out of that, it is understandable that we should feel that life has little to offer us. It is possible that we just do not know how to get joy out of work, of whatever kind it may be; or we may have a strong desire to be doing something quite different.

We need to look at such problems realistically. Are we qualified for the sort of job we think we want? Would we really like the job if we got it, or is it just something to daydream about, so that we will not have to face unpleasant realities? If we are sure we are suited for another line of work—and it is a good idea to get the opinion of somebody

who knows us and the work itself before we make up our mind—are we doing everything possible to get into it? Deferring attainment of our goal should not lead to misery.

Walter, when he found that he had no desire to put forth the necessary effort to struggle into another job, should have questioned whether his own desire to do something else, if he could not be promoted where he was, was as burning as he made himself think. Undoubtedly, he would have liked to become an official of the bank; but it was equally true that there were many things about the job that he did like. His pay was good, his job certain; he had congenial people to work with, and he had learned the work thoroughly. He would have been lost in any other job.

A young person, blocked from entering his chosen line, may be discouraged and even bitter. He will not feel that life is useless, however, so long as he has hope of eventually working into something that at least approaches what he would like to do. It may be different with the middle-aged man; reality may make his desire obviously a pipe dream.

For example, there was the man in his fifties who, although he had not completed high school and had worked all his life at unskilled labor, had never quite given up his boyhood dream of becoming a surgeon. Finally enabled to face reality and his part in hiding from it, he settled down quite contentedly to be an orderly in a hospital.

Some men at this age do find themselves holding down a job that no longer challenges their ability and that has become monotonous. They see no hope of advancement, and because they have a family to support, they are timid about taking a chance by changing jobs. They hold on, thinking to stick to the present job, at least until their children are grown.

To find oneself in such a situation is unpleasant; and if, in addition, personalities enter in, so that one has a strong dislike for one's immediate superior and no trust in the concern for which one works, then "unpleasant" is a mild term to use in describing one's plight.

Nevertheless, there are those who, in spite of the disagreeable aspects of their work, find other values and make for themselves a life that they would not willingly exchange for that of another. Also, we need to be sure that it is not something in our approach to life that sours everything, including our work, rather than the other way around. It is very difficult to know which is cause and which is effect.

Then there are those who maintain that their life is ruined because they are crippled or suffering from some chronic disease that is not fatal but that medicine as yet is unable to cure. Yet such people can look about them at others who are equally or even more handicapped and who have nevertheless worked out a satisfactory adjustment. Physical handicaps in themselves do not necessarily mean that life must be a burden.

Or it may be that a girl who from earliest childhood has aspired to be a great singer learns that she was not endowed with a great voice and that she must be satisfied with mediocrity. Such disappointment is hard to face, as is the death of a friend or the breaking up of a love affair, but it need not render life permanently useless.

All of these things of which we have been speaking are real; they cannot be banished by thought control. And all of us should do what we can toward building up a society that will keep frustrations to a minimum, whether the cause be lack of economic opportunity or lack of outlets for some of mankind's drives.

In the meantime, we are alive *now*, and all of us will have to live out our lives. To get the most out of life we can, in our own small way, try to make this a better world, if possible, so that we can leave it when we must without regrets—is not that the intelligent approach? Even though a man may have every right to be miserable, there is no law requiring him to exercise that right.

Every person has to do without some of the things he wants in life, and this is unpleasant. In most instances, however, it is not what a person has to do without or what is done to him that determines the zest he will get out of life. Man is not dependent to that extent on outside circumstances. In the last analysis, his happiness depends upon the kind of person with whom he spends his life: himself.

We all know this theoretically. We see those who seem to have everything to live for feeling very sorry for themselves, and we see others who seem to have little to live for knowing how to get the most joy out of every day. But where we ourselves are concerned, it is often difficult to put this knowledge into practice; and we often need help in doing so. Counselors came into being to fill this need.

Counselors cannot do away with all troubles, any more than doctors can do away with all disease. To those who find life a heavy burden, counselors offer help in finding the true cause of their troubles and expert advice as to how at least some of the discomfort can be relieved. If the difficulty is not of long standing or is simple in nature, it may be entirely cured, but, in general, what happens is that the person is helped to look at himself more objectively and to make realistic plans for changing the pattern of his life into something he would like better. William, Wade, Walter, and

Webster would have found in a counselor a person who would have enabled them to see their problem as others saw it; and, since they were all intelligent men, they could have done something about their difficulty once they saw it clearly enough to describe in words.

Why are we so apt to blame the lack of money or our partner in marriage for all our feelings of discouragement and futility? What are often the more basic causes for the way we feel? These will be taken up in the following chapters.

When Life Is but a Squeezed Lemon

LET US take a look at the reasons why people feel that living is not worth the effort it costs, why it seems to them like something perpetrated upon mankind as a joke, and a mighty poor joke at that.

Most of us, at some time in our lives, go through a period of this sort, when our burdens seem heavier than any human being can carry; when we find our road blocked, no matter which way we turn; and when we feel that, in all the world, there is no help for us. It is not pleasant, this mood, and most of us do not remain in it long; and after we have emerged, we can scarcely remember what it was like to feel that life was tasteless, except for a slight puckering sourness.

There are times when it is understandable that people should feel this way. Many adolescents, on facing adulthood, get an overwhelming sense of the burdensomeness of life. Or, when a person has suffered a great loss—such as the death of someone close and dear or the collapse of a venture into which he had put many years of his life—then a deep sense of isolation and futility may settle over him, although such a response is by no means universal. It is at such times that people lean most heavily upon their religious faith, in a belief in a meaning to life beyond that perceived here on earth.

Ordinarily, such a state of despair is temporary. Given a little time, and a gusto for living in the first place, and the human spirit is usually able to recuperate even from fate's knockout blows. When such a slant on life becomes chronic, however, we must look further for the cause, regardless of the obviousness of the original inducement. The first thing that we think of is the physical health of the person concerned.

There are those who seem to think of their minds as separate entities, independent of their bodies. This, of course, is a mistake. Our ability to remember or to reason depends, first of all, on a healthy state of the brain; while our moods, the tempo of our emotional reactions, are the result primarily of our physical make-up. In countless ways, our body is constantly influencing our manner of response and the way we feel.

It is equally ridiculous to think of the body as a separate entity. If our bodily condition influences our emotional state, it is equally true that our emotional state influences our bodily condition. "Stop worrying," advises the doctor, knowing full well that you cannot, and wishing that he could give you a prescription that would prevent worry, at least during part of each day. Or, to take another example, ask the surgeon whether he has high hope of success when he has to operate upon a patient who has given away his worldly goods and made up his mind to die.

Indeed, so intertwined are our emotional and bodily states that one cannot tell where one starts and the other ends, which is cause and which effect. Do our adrenal glands shoot potent hormones into our blood stream because we are angry, or do we become angry because of the effect of

the hormones that are being discharged into our body? Is anger a physical or a mental phenomenon? Of course, it is both.

The whys and wherefores of stomach ulcers are interesting to consider. For some time, doctors treated stomach ulcers by giving the patient a non-irritating diet and telling him to rest, operating only if he did not improve. People suffering from this condition tend to be thin, nervous, and short-tempered. This is understandable, considering the interference with digestion, the nagging discomfort. Then along came some doctors who, in certain specific instances, reversed their theory as to cause and effect. They believed that, in these particular cases, it was not the ulcers that caused the nervousness and irritability, but that the constant fussing and fuming of the patient caused the ulcers in the first place.

Their new theory was reasonable, since a person always tense with worries and inner conflicts disrupts his digestive function. We all know how an emotional upset will interfere with our ability to enjoy our meals. Although people are affected to varying degrees, many cannot eat at all just before some important event is scheduled to occur; or, if they do force the food down, it lies in their stomachs like a lump of lead. It is as if the glands that usually provide digestive juices at the proper moment were more concerned right then with other matters.

Thus it would seem logical that a chronic state of tenseness (such tenseness as many of us develop for short periods when we have to make a speech or other public appearance) should cause a physical disturbance in the stomach. Whatever the reason, the results seem to prove that those doctors

who have approached the problem from this angle, treating the causes of conflict within the individual and concentrating on getting him to provide himself with a serene environment, have also cured stomach ulcers.

On the other hand, the new treatment for some serious personality disorders is an example of the opposite type. Patients who have been in institutions for years suffering with certain types of insanity are now being given various kinds of shock treatments, consisting of the injection of chemical substances into their blood streams. This is being done because it has been found that the injection of these substances restores reason to many patients.

This result might raise the question as to whether these types of insanity are actually mental or physical diseases, if one continued to think that diseases should be classified in one or the other category. If they are to be considered mental diseases, because of the mental symptoms—the splitting of the personality and the general loss of reason—then that would give rise to a further question. In the delirium that goes with a high fever, such as is associated with typhoid, the symptoms also appear to be mental; and, of course, the brain is affected temporarily. Yet, because we know that bacteria cause typhoid, we tackle the illness from the physical angle. Should this also be classified as a mental disease as long as the delirium lasts? Does it really make any difference how we classify it, as long as we know how to treat it?

Instead of quibbling over words, the important thing for us all to realize is that the individual is not divided into two or more spheres. That is why, if we find ourselves out of joint with life, one of the first questions we should ask our-

selves is whether we are well, or at least as well as it is possible for medical science to make us.

We all know that, when we are under par physically, things will bother us that we would otherwise take in our stride, or that we may find it almost impossible to get through an ordinary day's work when we are worn out. The seriousness of the disability, as far as its threat to our life is concerned, is not necessarily in proportion to the burden it places upon us in our daily living. A person with an illness that is soon going to prove fatal may meet each day with vim, while possibly, at an earlier period in his life, a low-grade chronic infection that shortened his days scarcely at all may have dragged him down into a deep emotional depression.

The difficulty is that the symptoms and their cause may not be confined to the same area of living. Thus the fact that we have let the situation in which we find ourselves get the better of us may lead to a physical breakdown, one requiring medication, and yet one that can be permanently cured only by our becoming master of the situation. On the other hand, such a thing as an infection of the brain tissues may lead to an irritability or quickness of temper that gets the sufferer continually into hot water. He may not be conscious of any bodily symptoms that he thinks amount to anything, and to him his trouble may be that his wife does not love him as she should (how could she, the way he behaves?) and that his employers have been impossibly exacting, making it necessary for him to keep standing up for his rights and so lose his job. The infection checked, he may calm down and his troubles thus dissolve.

Can we prove even here that the infection was the cause

of his difficulties? Of course not. Perhaps nothing that involves the motivation of man can ever be proved in specific instances, although probabilities can be established. Possibly in this case, the man's wife had stopped liking him; and then, when he was sick, she became kind and fell in love with him again. In no family situation can we prove which is cause and which is effect, but we can learn from observation that a certain type of infection often produces a certain kind of behavior. And, at least, the fact remains that anybody with an infection of the brain tissues needs to have that condition cleared up if possible, regardless of what emotional problems he may be facing.

That is the reason why, if life has lost its flavor, if a person finds himself unable to get along with anybody, if little things annoy him beyond endurance, the best place to begin locating the source of the trouble is in a doctor's office. A person's ability to find life worth while is the result of an equation in which the problems that he has to face are balanced against his physical and emotional strength to meet them. Too often, people battle fruitlessly to diminish the difficulties confronting them when, with much less effort, they could increase their own strength and thus easily conquer their troubles.

We do not wish to imply, of course, that good health is a cure-all, or that happiness is forever denied those to whom medical science in its present state of development can promise nothing but a life of invalidism. We all know of people with serious physical disabilities, bedridden perhaps, who get enjoyment out of life and brighten the path of others. Ill-health is just one of the burdens that we all have to face at one time or another, for long or short periods and

for varying degrees of seriousness; and, like all other burdens, it can usually be borne without disaster.

To carry such a burden unnecessarily, however, is stupid—more than stupid in fact, since we seldom suffer alone. If we are grouchy, the days are made that much less pleasant for others. If we are physically unable to do our work adequately, whatever our job may be, somebody else has to take over our share, in addition to his own. In short, we are anything but noble if we go on, year after year, enduring a discomfort without trying to find out the cause and doing whatever can be done about it.

Miss Abbott came to see the counselor apparently merely in order that she might give verbal expression to her uncomplimentary thoughts about the principal of the school where she taught. Just a young whipper-snapper! Why, she had been teaching when he had still been in short pants. After all the years that she had taught in that school, the best years of her life, he now told her that, if her work did not improve, she might be dropped at the end of the year! Beneath her ladylike fury there was panic, panic at the thought of losing her source of livelihood. Asked what she expected the counselor to do, Miss Abbott said she did not know. She admitted that the principal had some grounds for his complaints. She did not know what the trouble was; perhaps it was her age. She felt tired so much of the time. She had never had disciplinary troubles before, but now it seemed that she just could not put forth the necessary effort to keep the children in order. She added, in a voice full of guilt, that even her interest in the children had flagged. Asked whether she had seen a doctor, she said that she had

not since early that fall, when she had been in bed a few days with the flu. Miss Abbott had a New England conscience, and for a grown woman to find herself not up to doing her daily job was to her nothing more than a weakness that will power should be able to overcome. A doctor might laugh at her or, worst of all, tell her she was just getting old.

Convinced of the wisdom of going back to the doctor, she did so, but without much enthusiasm. It was found that she was anemic. She had been driving on from day to day a body that was being nourished by a blood stream far short of its full strength. What she needed was not more will power but more iron, a change of diet. Under the new régime, it was not long before she was her old peppy self again.

Seldom are problems so easily solved, but the fact that some are shows the advisability of eliminating the possibility of the simple solutions first. Besides, most of us want our ailments attacked from both sides simultaneously. If we have stomach ulcers, we will want our doctor to prescribe medication and diet that will aid in the healing process, and we will also want to reduce the stress in our lives, so that another sore will not form as fast as the last one heals.

If we cannot bring about this lessening of tension in ourselves, if we do not have the necessary control over our environment to reduce its irritating qualities, then we should seek help elsewhere. It is here that the counselor has a part to play.

Yet, there will be those who will hesitate to seek the aid they need, because they will have the feeling that it is dis-

graceful for an adult not to be able to manage his life alone. Although this attitude has, on the whole, been pretty well outgrown, there are still those who turn immediately to a doctor when their bodies are ailing and who yet will hesitate when it is a question of asking help on something much more disturbing than physical disability and which may, in addition, be a contributing cause to bodily disorders.

When we take the time to think the matter through, we know that no man lives unto himself alone; we all receive aid of various kinds from other human beings all our lives. The important thing is to know when and where to get help, to recognize the necessity of finding it before the situation gets out of hand, so that we may live as satisfying a life as possible, not only for our own sakes, but equally for the sake of those about us. There is nothing disgraceful about needing help; it is part of being a member of the human race.

We need help, not because we are creatures lacking in normal mental capacity, who must turn to the more intelligent for guidance, but rather because we all have blind spots in looking at ourselves; we all have blockages that make us act in one way after we have reasoned things out and decided that it would be wise to do something else. Thus it is that an impartial person with common sense, and one versed in the workings of the human personality, can help us, regardless of whether or not he has a higher level of intelligence than we have.

Why is it that we determine to turn over a new leaf and then continue to behave in the same old way, even when we know we are doing ourselves harm? Why do our conscientious resolutions not to let little things bother us have no

effect on their power to irritate us? Why do we go on, year after year, doing the very thing that we have found from experience was not the thing to do, such as making the sort of remark that gets one into useless arguments? In short, why are we so often our own worst enemy?

We can see this clearly enough in others, and with a little help, we can usually see it even in ourselves. It is not a matter of trying to exert will power. That merely increases the tension and the danger of such things as stomach ulcers. Sometimes we need to get an unbiased person to help us decide what should be done; more often, however, we already know intellectually the best course to pursue but find that we cannot follow it.

The reason for this is that man is far from being a purely intellectual being. When the statement is put in this way, we know it is true; yet we are apt to be surprised when we observe this truth in ourselves and scornful when we observe it in others. Man is full of all sorts of likes and dislikes of which he does not know the origin; sudden swings in mood that he tries to explain by casting about for some event occurring simultaneously on which he can blame it; motives that he is ashamed of, and so calls by another name, even to himself; and past hurts that he has buried deep in forgetfulness and guards himself from disturbing. We are all driven by such hidden forces; often we do not know the real reason why we do certain things, and could never prove that we really know. Since the unconscious, that part of us containing hidden motives, is a necessity for human beings as they are constituted, we need only be concerned about these drives when we find ourselves blocked from effective living.

As a simple illustration, let us take the case of a man who does not like tomatoes. Perhaps, in the past, their acidity has caused him discomfort, or even a skin eruption. If so, his dislike would seem to be based on logic. On the other hand, he may tell us that he was born with a dislike for tomatoes. This would be difficult to disprove, but it is probably not true. It is much more likely that, on one or more occasions, tomatoes were associated in his mind with unpleasant occurrences, as when, as a child, he was forced to eat them when his stomach rebelled. Whatever the cause, it is nothing about which to become upset. There seems to be no reason why a man should not lead a happy, successful life without ever swallowing a slice of tomato.

More troublesome might be the plight of a man who has an aversion to all fat women. He gets into an industry composed almost entirely of men, marries a slip of a girl, and all seems well. But the slip of a girl bears him some children, and as her years add up, so does her weight. Not even to himself can this man admit that, merely because of her increase in poundage, he has lost his love for the woman who has been a faithful wife to him all these years. If you should suggest such a thing, he would deny it hotly and honestly. Never would he be such an ingrate! No, the trouble is with his wife: she does thus and so. He looks for reasons why his love is gone, reasons that will satisfy his sense of fair play. But still he is not satisfied, because the excuses he has manufactured do not hold water.

Thus he is very miserable, and doubtless his wife is equally so. Things get worse and worse as he tries more and more to find justification for his conduct, which, to himself, he can never justify. He does not know the true reason for

his growing repugnance toward his wife. The actual faults that he finds with her (many of which are the result of his own attitude) do not satisfy him, and so he can neither live with his wife in peace nor break away from her.

Why does he so dislike fat women? We could offer many explanations. Perhaps when he was a small child, he had a nurse, a large woman, who was unkind to him and of whom he became intensely afraid. Possibly she was the only fat woman he knew at that time, and so the fatness and the terror became associated in his unconscious mind, where such things are hidden beneath the surface. Probably this explanation is too simple, but it shows how the mind often works.

The important thing to know is that it is not necessary for this individual to go on being miserable and making his family so, too. The simplest solution, of course, once the cause is known, would be for his wife to go on a diet. On the other hand, once he sees the connection between the earlier hate for his nurse and his present repugnance toward his wife, the association would very likely be broken. There are several theories as to why bringing these hidden drives into the open, where the individual can get a good look at them, so often deprives them of their power. It is as if, once they are hauled into the realm of consciousness, the intellect can tackle them and make short work of them. Obviously, it is silly to blame one's wife for the meanness of some woman she never knew, merely because they both happened to be fat. Such injustice can arise only when we do not know what we are up to.

However, the man in question may never be able to resurrect his dead past. The childhood memory may be so

painful that that part of him which controls what shall become conscious may never be able to let the experience pass the threshold of consciousness. This does not mean that there is no help for the man. As we have said, such problems are not likely to be so simple as the one we have described. Hidden drives within us become more powerful if we are in a weakened state. Also, the chances are that there were other sources of conflict between husband and wife, even if her avoirdupois was the most obvious difficulty. His life is probably none too comfortable in other ways. Helped to work out more obvious problems between himself and his wife, strengthened in his sense of security within himself, he may redirect his energy into constructive channels; and the memory of his nurse, even though it will never die as long as his mind is functioning, may lose some of its power over him. He may always have an aversion toward fat women, an aversion that neither he nor anybody else will ever know about, but his positive feeling toward his wife may so far overbalance this that he can get along with her quite well.

All this does oversimplify the matter, since there is nothing simple about the human personality, and those who want to understand even the first thing about how it works must spend years in study. Two fundamentals need to be emphasized. The fact that one has a high-caliber mind is no guarantee that he will make the most of life. Many of the things that motivate us the mind is never permitted to know about; and what it does not know about, it cannot completely govern. Second, the reason another person may be able to help us is not that he is brighter than we are

(although he may be), but that he is not subject to our pet quirks, so that the motives we hide from ourselves so carefully may be clearly seen by him.

It may seem that we are the victims of our impulses, but this need be true only to a limited extent. To be sure, we are born a certain type of person, as far as physical make-up goes; and things that happen to us, particularly in our childhood, mold us in various ways. In that sense, we are a certain kind of person because of forces beyond our control, but that is far from saying that such forces determine the kind of life we shall lead or the amount of satisfaction we get out of living. The power of the mind is limited, it is true; yet because of that power, man is able to master his fate to an extent permitted to no other living creature. When life has become a squeezed lemon, we can find the cause if we seek it intelligently.

To do this, however, we need to have some understanding as to how we have become the sort of people we are.

CHAPTER IV

Why We Are as We Are

WHATEVER we may be at the moment, we all started out as helpless babies. We were born into the world with certain physical equipment and mental capacity, and with a certain emotional set that perhaps can best be called our "temperament." At the very beginning, the outside world went to work on us; and from that moment, it becomes very difficult to prove which traits were inborn and which were acquired.

As babies, we are of course completely dependent on others for survival. Left to our own devices, we should soon freeze or die of hunger and thirst. At first, we accept the services of others without question. We yell, and food appears; that is as it should be! Then, as we gradually develop, we come to recognize that it is certain other beings who are catering to our wants. We know their faces or their voices, and we differentiate them from strangers who have never done anything for us as far as we know. That recognition of services rendered is the beginning of love.

We also have to learn that these protectors of ours either are not all-powerful or they are not completely our friends. We cry, and nothing happens; we get hungry, and nobody feeds us; we get a stomach-ache, and nothing they do eases us. Thus we find out almost at once that the world is not an entirely pleasant place. Most of us accept this fact, but

there are those who spend all the rest of their lives kicking against it.

Throughout babyhood, we get both this positive and this negative slant on life itself and toward other human beings. Pleasant things happen to us, and things that are not so pleasant. The adults about us show by their voices, as well as their actions, that they love us; and we respond. Then they show us that we sometimes annoy them; they scold and punish us. We make mistakes sometimes, too, and take as punishment actions that are not meant in that way. We want things we cannot have; and when we do not get them, we blame the adults who seem to us to be all-powerful beings. We do not realize, at first, that our parents cannot give us everything we want; and when we do come to the realization, it is again a blow to our sense of security. No longer is there anything on which we can entirely rely.

The influence of all this on one's attitude toward life is, of course, easiest to see in the extreme examples. Take, for instance, those children whose parents unwisely insulate them against all the unpleasant side of life as much as they can.

John Blair was only seven years old when he was brought to the Child Guidance Clinic because he kept his school in a turmoil. A husky child, he was a holy terror. He grabbed the belongings of other children, paid no attention to the teacher, fought with or without excuse.

John was an only child, born to parents who had feared they would never have any children. Everything that he showed the slightest desire for he had been given, if human ingenuity and the income of a fairly well-to-do father could

provide it. Never did he have to consider the feelings or wishes of those about him, since their only desire was to please him. He was never told to hush because others wished peace and quiet. He learned to take but not to give.

Naturally, when John was thrust into the outside world, there was trouble. He had never learned that people could scold without hating him, that they could refuse his requests and not be his bitter enemies. As far as he could see, he was a small boy alone in a hostile world. Having a fundamentally sound personality, he did not retreat into himself; he did not become a frightened, silent child who, to an undiscerning teacher, might easily seem a model pupil. Even if the battle was a hopeless one, he was determined to put up a good fight, and put up a good fight he did. The natural response of those about him—to become more and more antagonistic—only added fuel to the flames.

The problem had to be approached from the other end. First of all, John had to be convinced that these persons who attempted to control him did not hate him. It was not the restrictions imposed in themselves that he was fighting, but the meaning that they held for him, namely, that he was being singled out as an object of hatred.

On the other hand, look at the Cox brothers, who were brought up in the same environment. Harold, the elder, was already known to the courts for petty thievery, although his father was able to give him everything he needed. Ernest had always been a model son, never giving his parents a moment's worry until now, in his early teens, when they suddenly realized that there was something abnormal about his entire lack of interest in boyish activities.

Both parents were busy people, too busy to be parents

in any real sense of the word. They provided a substantial house for their sons to live in, wholesome food for them to eat, a good school—and they considered their job done. Unfortunately, there had been no fond relative about who served as the parents' substitute, no devoted servant.

Since there was no sense of being loved on which the boys could build, their response to others was one of fear and hostility. Being children, they could survive only if the adults about them were willing to provide food and shelter. They had no faith that necessities would be provided even if they displeased their parents. Harold responded by openly showing his hostility, opposing all authority and fighting for his independence by trying to break his ties with his parents. To care for others seemed to him but a weakness that put one at the loved one's mercy, and so he became a "tough guy," and substituted for the affection that he had been denied the adulation of smaller boys whom he corralled into a gang.

Harold was still putting up a fight, but Ernest was already defeated. He was afraid even to try for independence. He too felt that, to displease his elders, would mean being abandoned by them, and so he was careful never to displease them. This does not mean that his antagonism was less than his brother's; quite the contrary! Harold led raids on newsstands and broke windows at night. Ernest's feeling of resentment toward his elders was so strong that he feared to show any trace of it, lest he bring upon himself the retaliation of those stronger than he. So he kept it bottled up, and never did anything that might stir it up. He was a very unhappy young boy, distrusting everything, above all his own impulses.

In passing, it should be remarked that the parents of

these boys were able to discuss intelligently the upbringing of their children. The difficulty lay in an emotional blocking of their own, which made it impossible for them to show affection to the children.

Few of us grow up in homes as extreme as that of the Blairs or the Coxes, but nevertheless, to some degree, we are all exposed to this sort of thing in childhood, and it colors our future relationship with others. Some people have no hesitancy in forming friendships, no fear that the tie thus made will be used by their friends to bind them. Other people move cautiously, careful not to give others a hold on them without having first protected themselves against the power these friends would thus have over them. Then there are those who always have the feeling that they have to bribe people to be their friends; they had to be obedient to keep their parents' love, and so now they have to win the friendship of others by forever doing things for them.

Associated with this ability to like and be liked is one's attitude toward authority. We first know authority as represented by our parents and enforced by superior physical strength. As a crawling baby, we get hold of something pretty and shiny. But our mother takes the scissors away, and all our squalling will not make her give them back. That is the form of authority that we all come in contact with early, and most children seem to become comparatively philosophical about it all. Some, however, learn their lesson so well that they never question the advisability of following commands in later life. What they are taught in school is, of course, true because their teachers have said so, and their confusion is pitiful when their teachers disagree as

to what is true. The outcome of their lives depends almost entirely on the sort of commands under which they fall. This situation can be seen in the totalitarian countries to-day, where the youth have been drilled since an early age in unquestioning obedience.

Then there are others who never accept authority. They rebel against everything, important or unimportant. They may become outlaws or revolutionists, or merely bitter individuals fighting a never-ending battle that would make them no happier if they won it. Such results do not necessarily indicate that, as children, they were brought up too strictly or not strictly enough. The main difficulty was that, in some way, authority became to them a hostile thing in itself. They not only felt the natural resentment that comes from being prevented from doing what one wants to do, but control in itself became for them an act of hatred. Somehow they did not see what most children soon understand, that no matter how obnoxious and unnecessary the commands of parents may be, back of them all lie good intentions. Instead of seeing foolish but well-meaning parents who could be opposed and still be loving, they felt only a power that desired to control them for the sake of power alone. In short, the trouble was not the number of regulations imposed in the home (or lack of them, in contrast to the outside world), but the absence of that sense of being loved for themselves alone, regardless of whether they were good or bad.

Most of us who grew up in a democracy have a deep-rooted dislike of authority. We feel an urge to step off the path onto the green whenever we see the sign, "Keep off the grass"; but this urge is controlled by an intellectual reali-

zation that, wherever human beings live together, laws and law enforcers are needed. Our feeling about being bossed is most likely to get in our way when it is a matter of getting along with our "superiors" on a job.

Closely allied with our opposition to authority is our yearning for power. Instead of spending our energy fighting the control of others, we may set out to get the reins into our own hands. In fact, almost all of us have a desire for power to some degree, but some seem to live for that and nothing else.

Power comes in different forms. Some think of money as power, not only to get what they want, but to command others: to get as much money as possible is their one aim in life. Others want social position, fame, or perhaps only a position in which they can boss others, whether it be in the Army or in a factory. Others are satisfied if they can be a dictator within the family circle, their need to have others under their control being more important to them than the love of their wives and children.

Then we come to the matter of growing up. Every child is torn between the desire to grow up and the desire not to do so, between the wish to have more independence and the fear of the additional responsibilities involved. It would be fine to be big and strong, but it is also fine to be protected and to have little expected of one. For example, when the small boy sees that his still younger sister does not get scolded for spilling her milk, while he does, he goes back to babyish ways that he had outgrown some months before.

It is natural to want to be big; but if a child sees that the younger members of the family get all the parents' attention, or if he is continually being told that he is now too

old to behave as he does, then the attractions of helplessness may overbalance those of growing up. We have all seen people who shirk responsibility whenever they can, who try to get others to look after them and, in every way, show that they were never permitted to see the fun of growing up.

There are others who will never admit the slightest weakness, who make a fetish of self-reliance and know how to give but not how to take in a human relationship. In the past, these persons were somehow made to feel ashamed of the human desire to be at times dependent on another.

Probably the majority of people, on the whole, like to be their own masters; but when things go very badly, then, consciously or unconsciously, they tend to remember longingly those days when others had the responsibility of caring for them. At such times, people may become resentful toward members of their family group who do not assume a protective attitude, although in fairer weather, they would have resented the very attitude for which they now yearn. Indeed, it is rather common for usually self-sufficient people to become quite childish temporarily after having been dealt some terrific blow by fate. Their need to be protected shows itself until they have had time to regain their strength. This response is natural, for, in many ways, the most comfortable period of our lives is perhaps that which we spend within our mothers' wombs, in an even temperature, well fed, unharmed, and where everything is brought to us without effort on our part.

Not only do we have to grow from childhood to adulthood, but we also have to grow from boys into men and girls into women, and sometimes that, too, we find difficult. Ordinarily, a child patterns himself after the parent of his

own sex, but is more stimulated in his relationship with the other parent. Or, to put it in other words, the boy tries to be like his father, and so the apple of his mother's eye. Later, he will be likely to pick for a wife a girl who seems to him to be the sort of woman his mother was.

Various things can go wrong at this point. A child may be made to feel that it is a great disadvantage to be a member of the sex to which he belongs, and may go through life feeling that fate played a mean trick on him. The girl may see her brothers constantly doing pleasant things that are forbidden to her, and possibly receiving more of both her parents' attention than she does. Her resentment may become so deeply ingrained that it is never possible for her to have a real love relationship with a member of the male sex, or she may spend her life in a futile effort to act like a man.

It is not, however, always the girl who feels thus cheated. The boy may feel that the girl is given the inside track all the time; that he has all the responsibilities, while she has all the fun. This, again, may interfere with his ability to become a mature marriage partner, since his childish feeling will intrude at crucial moments. Or the boy may be taunted for lack of manliness, so that he is ashamed of the slightest weakness, which he thinks of as being a feminine trait. As a result, he may hide his need for dependency even from himself, not knowing that even the strongest of men must have their weak moments.

Indeed, according to recent psychological research, it appears that difficulties at this point in a child's development can lead to homosexuality. This is understandable when we think of what continuous parental disapproval may mean

to a child. He cannot help trying to make himself like the person who gave him life and a chance to survive in an unfriendly world. If he is consistently repulsed, he gets a tremendous sense of failure. In trying to become a man, he does not please those he needs to please most, and so he may give up the fight.

It is not very often that parents obviously lack affection for their children and are outwardly hostile; usually, the difficulty is that the parent cannot bear to let the child grow up. When the child tries to become an individual in his own right, he frequently fights with more vigor than wisdom, mainly because he is fighting his own desire to remain young and helpless, as well as the strength of those who can keep him in their power. Thus he becomes boisterous and impudent, and a trial to those about him, unless they possess a sense of humor and enough security within themselves so that they do not have to hang on to the controls for the sake of the power involved.

The parent has to maintain control, it is true; both legally and morally he is held responsible until the child shall have reached maturity. The danger comes when the child is made to feel that the result of his continued struggle toward adulthood will be the loss of the love of one or both parents. He may defy the world, and cut all ties between him and those he cannot help but love as well as hate; or he may yield completely, continue to fear to develop emotional maturity, and so remain all his life "mamma's boy."

Such early life experiences as these, forgotten though they often are, explain why we behave as we do. We have to understand that, not only does a child fear the hostility of his parents—both because of his parents' power and his need

for their love—but he may fear even more his own hostility toward them. Without putting it all into words, he feels that, if his hostility should become apparent, the retaliation of his elders would annihilate him. In self-preservation he hides it, hides it especially from himself, and there it festers. Fortunate, indeed, is the child who early learns that, cross as his parents may become with him at times, their love never wavers.

Prejudices are also interesting to consider. How do we get our likes and dislikes in the first place? After we have once got them, we dig up nice rational explanations for them. The kind of music we like to listen to is obviously the “best” music, or that which is most attuned to the modern world; and when it comes to the people we take an instant liking or dislike to, is it not apparent that we are unusually good judges of character? Thus we fool ourselves, but not so often others; and no harm is done. However, since we are taking a look at how we came to be what we are, we should say a few words about this process of “conditioning.”

Conditioning is the result of the mind’s ability to associate and to reason. A child gets too near the stove, and he burns his fingers. Thereafter, he is cautious about the stove, which he associates with heat; and we approve, since we want him to be careful around it. Let us suppose that one day, as he is creeping about the lawn, a big dog comes along; the dog gets too playful and knocks the child over. The child is frightened, and after that cries whenever he sees a dog, which to him has become the symbol of roughness. Since not all dogs are rough, and since it is too bad for him to be afraid of them all, the wise parent gets the child a small dog of his own, which he learns to love; and thus he becomes conditioned in the opposite direction, learning that

only some dogs are rough and that others are fun to play with.

Suppose that, at another time, the baby is put out on the porch to sleep in his carriage, and a storm comes up suddenly and again frightens him. The next day, when it is time for his nap, he screams in terror when placed in the carriage. The roaring of the wind and the rolling of the thunder have become associated in the child's mind with an innocent object: the carriage in which he lay. This mental connection can be broken by substituting pleasant ideas concerning the terrifying object. Perhaps he is given rides in it up and down the street with his mother's face always in sight.

All our lives we do this sort of thing. We come to dislike some individual, and thereafter feel justified in being set against all those who resemble him in creed, race, or facial characteristics. We dislike some shade of cloth because once somebody who wore that color put us in a very unpleasant position, and we hide this ridiculous lack of reasoning by priding ourselves on our superior artistic sense.

It is easy to understand that one of the things we frequently get queer ideas about is sex. If we first learn about sex in a way that is deeply shocking to us, or if our first experience with it is painful or frightening, we may carry a scar that makes it difficult for us to abandon ourselves to an adult relationship with our chosen mate, at least unless we have had counteracting pleasant associations. What more commonly happens is that the parent reacts with disgust or violent distaste to the child's early handling of his own body or his questions concerning sex. As a result, the child senses that the parent is more concerned about this realm of life than about most others, and this arouses his curiosity. On

the other hand, he realizes that, somehow, "wickedness" is connected with the whole matter. Even after he is grown and knows intellectually that this drive of his is nothing of which to be ashamed, he may never be able to throw off the feeling of guilt that accompanies it because of the sense of shame that was deeply ingrained in his youth by the attitude of his elders toward the subject. The response of his parents may lead the child to decide that, if ever they should learn that even in his thoughts he dwelt upon such matters, they would turn away from him. Consequently, in order not to be forsaken, he suppresses such impulses deep within himself.

Men as well as women grow up and marry and become parents without ever losing the secret fear that there is something shameful about the sexual relationship. All too easily this can play havoc with a marriage, both from the man's standpoint and that of his partner. The interdependence of our bodies and our emotions nowhere shows up more clearly than where the sex mechanism is involved, and traces of fears and doubts—even though they be remnants of childhood and unconscious—may block wholehearted enjoyment of one of the unique features of the marriage relationship. Doubts may be buried in the first enthusiastic desire of newlyweds to demonstrate their love following the wedding, only to bob up later when the going gets rough; so that sex, instead of aiding in the deepening of the fellowship, becomes a stumbling block in the path of the married pair.

Thus it is that the importance of emotional associations to the final well-being of the individual varies widely according to what they are concerned with. In some instances, such as that of the man who disliked tomatoes, unpleasant sensations may be of no importance at all; but a guilty

tension in regard to sex may upset a marriage. Yet, back of both responses may be the same fundamental cause, the fact that sometime during the person's lifetime a very disagreeable occurrence became connected in his mind with the eating of tomatoes or the sex act. In this way, many of the things in life, both big and little, become emotionally charged for us in a way of which we are not conscious.

It is of such things that the being we think of as "ourselves" is made, and it is also the reason why you have a right to snort in disbelief if anybody tells you that they understand you. How can they? They have no way of knowing all these things that have made you what you are. You don't know them yourself, and usually there is no reason why you should. As long as you can get enough of the things you have taken a liking to and can avoid enough of the things you have taken a dislike to, so that you find life quite bearable, there is no reason to be concerned as to how it all came about. Nevertheless, now and then you may find it fun to dig back to the root of some pet hate, just for the dickens of it! If its beginning lay in something highly unpleasant, however, your unconscious will doubtless protect you by keeping you well off the track. Life on this planet at least is not long enough to enable a person to drag forth into the light of day reasons for all his likes and dislikes.

Under certain circumstances, however, some digging may become necessary. A person who is to wield influence over others, especially over the troubled or the young, has the moral obligation to do all he can to rid himself of secret drives and kinks that might lead him unwittingly to injure his charges. Again, some spading about may be the only way for a person who is finding life too much for him to get himself under control again.

CHAPTER V

What to Do about Ourselves

WHERE should we take hold when we find ourselves at cross-purposes with life? If we find our marriage not what it ought to be, our children growing beyond us, our job getting on our nerves, other people difficult to get along with, or all of these things true at once, then what should we do?

In practically no two cases will the answer be the same, so diverse is human nature and the conditions with which each one of us contends. To try to give specifics would be as ridiculous as to try to give the same prescription to every one who has a fever. However, even though a fever may be a sign of anything from acute infection to mere excitement, some general advice can be given: get in bed, eat little, and, above all, call a doctor. So it is with the ailments of the human spirit. There is no need to be completely at a loss, as we sometimes are when confronted with such problems.

In the first place, it is just as important here as it is when dealing with physical illnesses to have some diagnostic sense about which symptoms are probably of little importance and which call for immediate treatment by an expert. Most of us have home remedies for cut fingers, sore throats, and headaches; but we watch for signs of fever or infection that call for the services of a physician. In the field of emotional disturbances, we are more apt to rely entirely on makeshift

home remedies and not to recognize symptoms that call for our seeking expert help.

If we ask ourselves whether the difficulty we are facing involves merely one area of our life or whether it is generalized, it is quite likely that we shall give ourselves the wrong answer, because we should much prefer to have some specific situation to blame than to have to admit that the trouble is with our way of handling the process of living. Yet, that is not all. Even if the problem be limited in its scope, we still need to know whether it is merely the result of lack of knowledge as to how to meet our problems or whether we are working with an unrealized emotional twist of some kind. Often, the only way to determine this is to see whether a problem will yield to the attack of the intellect. If not, then the trouble lies deeper.

This may be clearer if we discuss the problems presented by the Davis, Eaton, and Fuller couples. Mr. Davis, Mrs. Eaton, and Mrs. Fuller all came to ask help within the first year of their marriage, with the similar complaint that, although they had been deeply in love when they married, already the bloom was fading. Their tempers were becoming raw, and from little things serious quarrels grew, resulting in their saying things they did not mean.

It so happened that all three marriages were the result of campus romances, and that the couples had married shortly after graduation; and since the men were attempting to get a foothold on the economic ladder, the couples wished to prevent the coming of children for a year or so. It was around this point that they thought their difficulty centered. In short, the three couples presented very similar symptoms. Let us see whether the bases of their troubles were the same.

Mr. Davis had graduated the previous June from the engineering school and was now working temporarily with a concern with which he hoped to become permanently connected. He had married a classmate whom he had known practically all his life. He stated his problem in a forthright manner: the constant squabbling at home was affecting his work, and thus might do permanent damage to his career. Anyway, he did not want to live a bickering life either for his own sake or that of his wife. He wasted no time trying to place the blame on his wife or to ward it off from himself. He wanted to know how to improve things.

It soon was apparent that he was woefully ignorant as to the nature of women, that he had little conception of some of the most marked differences between the emotional make-up of the two sexes. When suggestions were made, he accepted them readily, indicating that he apparently had no inner blocking, but that the trouble was merely that his education along a line vital to his happiness had been neglected. He and his wife were given concrete advice and books to read.

A little more than a year later the couple came back to report progress. The husband had the permanent job that he wanted, and they had decided to raise a family at once; in fact, the woman was already pregnant. They admitted having a spat once in a while, but the important thing, they agreed, was that they had built up a happy life together. So it seemed that here we had a couple, genuinely fond of each other and able to face life maturely, who had been temporarily facing difficulties that they could overcome if given some wise information, difficulties that might otherwise have dragged on until their mutual love died.

Mrs. Eaton gave much the same account of her troubles as Mr. Davis had, but underlying everything she said was blame for her husband. He was lacking in consideration for her; she knew that was the basis of the difficulty. She thought that she had come for information, but it was apparent that she would much prefer to receive confirmation of her charges against her husband. The very fact that she sought such confirmation showed that, deep down, she was not too sure that her irritation with him was well founded.

She, too, asked for concrete information, but there the similarity with the other situation ends. It would have done no good to point out to her that she probably was partly at fault, that it takes two to make a quarrel. She knew all that anyway, and to be told so would not have aided her in finding the cause of her resentment against her husband. It would merely confirm her own half-hidden belief that she was doing wrong to feel this resentment, and so result in its being buried the deeper and thus becoming the more dangerous for her own and her husband's peace of mind.

In fact, the first thing it was necessary to do was to eliminate from her mind the idea that to feel a certain way was "wrong." It might be that the feeling was illogical, that it merely increased her unhappiness and that of those about her; in short, there might be many reasons why she would want to change the way she felt toward her husband, but her feelings were not a matter of her deliberate choice. It was not a scolding that she or her husband needed. They had had too much of that already from themselves and from others.

Therefore, the woman was encouraged to stop fussing

about herself or her husband and to try to determine why she felt this need to fuss, why she thought her husband had disappointed her when she could point to nothing concrete that he had done and admitted that she had known him well before her marriage and that he had not changed. Thus Mrs. Eaton was led to talk about how she had happened to marry, about her childhood; and she returned to talk a number of times before it all became clearer to her.

When she spoke of her father, there were red streaks of anger in her face. He had always been overbearing and had exacted immediate obedience. He had treated her like a young child even after she was grown, but she had got away from him finally by marrying. Gradually, Mrs. Eaton came to understand that she had married to prove her independence of her father, having picked a man her father personally disliked in order to make her action more pointed. She had known about her antagonism to her father. What she had not known was that she bore him a devotion equally deep; that, even though she fought him, still he was her ideal. Love to her was associated with being dominated, a pattern laid down in childhood. She laughed at herself when she saw what she had done: "I guess I'm the kind of woman who adores a man for beating her up every so often, and then I go and marry a man who would die rather than strike a woman!"

At last, she had the situation out in the open. She no longer had to stir up arguments in order to have an excuse for the irritation she felt. She knew now why she felt it, and knowing gave her more control over her feeling. After all, there were many qualities her husband had that she admired very much indeed, and this desire for the caveman

type was just a hangover from childhood. She came to see that if she had married a domineering man she would have fought him just as she had always fought her father, and her married life would have been as tempestuous as her girlhood had been. With the help of a devoted husband, she was able to work out a reasonably happy way of life.

Mr. Davis was able to manage his difficulty when given needed knowledge. Mrs. Eaton had to have help beyond that; both were having trouble with one sphere of life but were handling other areas capably.

Mrs. Fuller never got to see her problem as clearly as did the other two. She was an only child, brought up by a widowed mother, who smoothed the girl's path until she died suddenly when the girl was in her junior year at college. Rather than face life alone, she married Mr. Fuller, and now she felt that he had failed her because he would not, or could not, protect her from all the unpleasant things in life as had her mother. This feeling was not related to her husband alone, however, because when she gained enough confidence to let her defenses down, she admitted that she had the same feeling, even if to a lesser degree, about everybody with whom she came in contact. She was not accustomed to having to accept responsibility on an adult level, and those who now forced her to do so seemed to her to be acting with deliberate cruelty.

Instead of growing gradually through the years, she was called upon at the age of twenty-two to grow up at one fell swoop. Naturally the process was painful, and naturally she put the blame on the person closest to her: her husband; but her difficulty was on a much wider basis than merely her relationship with her husband. The danger was that she

might continue to place the cause of all her discomfort outside herself on others and become more distrustful, more embittered, and more unhappy all the time. But when she sat down and explained her difficulty, listened to herself as she uttered complaints about others, she suddenly saw that possibly part of the trouble was that she herself had been spoiled. The battle was half won when she admitted that; however, she did not believe it when others told her so, but only when the knowledge sprang from an increased understanding of herself.

All three—Mr. Davis, Mrs. Eaton, and Mrs. Fuller—were unhappy, and they all believed that the difficulty lay in their inability to work out satisfactory sexual adjustments with their mates. They thought that what they needed was information from an expert in that field. Only one found that this cleared up his problem; the other two had to continue working on their difficulties until the true basis was brought to light. Thus it is that frequently the only way to find out where our trouble really lies is to treat each symptom; and if, in its wake, another symptom springs up, or if the symptom itself does not yield to an attack by the intellect, then we know that we have to search further for underlying causes.

It can even happen that a person is not dissatisfied with life at all, but thinks that he ought to be. Take Mr. Griffin, for example: He came for advice with the statement that life was thoroughly distasteful to him. He made an adequate salary in a large advertising concern, but felt that he was throwing his life away in thus commercializing his talent. In his youth he had studied art in a foreign land and, on returning to this country, had planned to become a por-

trait painter. Instead, he had married and taken the first job that came along, which was with the same company where he was now employed. He spoke bitterly of his wife's marrying him, as if she had deliberately taken advantage of him. (Later he admitted that he had pursued her for months and that she had turned him down a number of times before he persuaded her to accept him.) He resented the fact that she had presented him with four children (presumably he had something to do with their arrival), and that keeping up a family of this size kept his nose to the grindstone. The implication was that a genius was going to pot. He had even gone so far as to wonder whether he ought not to leave his family and strike out for himself.

Led on to talk more about his ambitions, Mr. Griffin stated that he had not touched his paintbrushes in more than a year because he had no time. He was asked what he did evenings, and it turned out that he had many things to do. He liked to play poker and he was a movie addict. Also, he liked to give impromptu parties and to attend those given by others. Asked what he did on week ends, he told of various activities, such as riding around the countryside, playing golf, and going fishing.

Listening to himself, Mr. Griffin realized that he had no great urge to paint. As a child, he had planned to be a great painter, and now that he had not done so, he felt guilty, and so tried to pass the blame on to his wife and children. It was not because he had to earn a living for them that he did not paint; there were just too many other things that he preferred doing. Whether he would have made a good painter if he had stuck to his art is beside the point. The fact is he was living the sort of life that he really wanted to live, and as soon as he could admit this to himself and stop

feeling ashamed of preferring an evening of poker to an evening with his paintbrushes, he not only found life much more satisfactory for himself but was able also to help his wife lead a much happier existence.

Possibly a great deal of unnecessary discontent would be eliminated if we all had clearly in mind the kind of life that we want for ourselves. If we do not know what we want, naturally we have difficulty in working toward a definite goal. It is not a bad idea to write down in definite terms what our hopes are, and then review the statement once a year, possibly on our birthdays. This does not mean that our goals will not change. As time goes on, we find satisfactions in different things and learn more about what has true value for us. It would be sad to think that a man of fifty had not learned enough about life to have changed the goals he had set for himself at fifteen.

Nevertheless, it is useful to know what we are aiming at for the time being. In our relationship with others, which is the more important to us: to have power over them by means of our money or position, or to have their genuine friendship as our equals? Which means more to us: success in our chosen profession, or a serene home life? Not that it is always a question of "either . . . or," or that we are always given the chance to choose; but if we were clearer about what we really wanted, we should not so often sacrifice something that means a great deal to us in an effort to achieve something that we actually care much less about. Just the act of trying to write down in concrete terms exactly what we should like to have had in the way of a good life by the time we reach three score and ten might make many things somewhat clearer to us.

Of course, we have to deal only with what we know about our aims; but when we are of two minds about what we want—one conscious and the other unconscious—this will often come to light if, from year to year, we study our progress toward what we think we want. If we always seem to block ourselves, we can guess that our action is no accident. Thus, a young man who thinks that the one thing he wants is a home, and yet who goes on year after year always finding some serious fault in his lady love just when a proposal of marriage is about due, can be pretty sure that, if he is being propelled toward marriage by conscious desire, he is also being propelled away from it by some unconscious doubts.

Many of us continually block our own paths, causing dissatisfaction within us. Nor will happiness necessarily come from pushing forward. If the uncertain young man finally gets too near the brink of matrimony, and in a moment of passion does propose marriage, his inner doubts will not evaporate but will probably become even more of a sore spot once he finds himself married. The tension is wiped out only when the two views are reconciled—when he is of one mind again.

Also, the facts must be taken into account. All the determination in the world to be an opera singer will not make a person one if he lacks the voice for it. Not to have attained such a goal under such circumstances cannot be blamed on inner blockings. The fact that one has no voice, however, does not mean that he will have to give up music; nor does it even mean, as anybody who listens to the radio knows, that he must give up singing. It is only the hope of appearing in opera that must be relinquished.

In general, we blame on circumstances over which we have no control failures arising from causes well within our control. Not that there is any harm in this in itself. Indeed, if we can blame fate for something, and then go on from there, we are the better off. But generally, we carry forward instead as active desires those that are really dead; and so we annoy ourselves to no purpose, as did the advertising man who thought he wanted to be a portrait painter.

This brings us around again to where we started. When we feel that we are not getting out of life all that we should, we need to give serious thought to where the trouble lies, rather than place the blame on the first person or thing that bobs into view. If we believe that the difficulty lies in our not being able to handle some particular type of situation, then we need to know where to go to secure the necessary information. If we are unable to profit by the information, then we can suspect that the difficulty lies deeper than we thought. If we wish to understand why we act as we do and how to change our own reactions, then we need to find somebody skilled in helping people to talk their hidden thoughts into the open.

If our discontent is widespread, if our irritation is with things in general, or if we can no longer find pleasure in any of the things that used to please us, then we need to be sure, first, of the state of our physical health, progressing from that to our mental and emotional health. Even when we know that we want to get help, however, we may not know where to look for it, so that knowing the sources from which aid may be had is almost as important as knowing when it is needed.

CHAPTER VI

Where to Get Help

ONE of the innate qualities of human beings is the desire to help other people who are in trouble. Thus it is very seldom that we lack for well-meant advice when we are in difficulty. Let it but be known about town that Jack and Jessie, newly wed, have had their first serious spat, and friends, relatives, and neighbors all want to rush to the rescue.

If a sincere desire to aid another endowed us with the ability to do so, we should need neither counselors nor doctors, since we should all be cured of our physical ills and our unhappiness by our well-wishers. But since this cannot be, we need to know where to turn for expert advice and to know when it is needed.

We might roughly classify counselors as follows: the amateur, or non-professional; the semi-professional, a person whose main interest is in a profession other than counseling but who does some counseling on the side; and the professional counselor.

Thus Jessie, when her husband goes off to work leaving her in tears at the breakfast table, may turn for advice to her best friend, Betty, who has been married several years already and seems to be managing her husband without undue friction. Betty, who has never made a study of mar-

ital difficulties, speaks from her personal experience and probably gives Jessie sound advice. The difficulty is that what worked for Betty may not work for Jessie. Perhaps Betty's husband has a high temper and says things that he does not mean and for which he is immediately sorry, so that Betty's plan of ignoring such outbursts works well. Jack, on the other hand, may be a silent fellow who has difficulty in putting things into words. His quick anger is an outward symptom of something that is troubling him, something that he wants to get to the bottom of; and if Jessie sweeps his efforts at explanation aside as something of no importance, their difficulty may become more and more serious.

As we have said, in most communities there are some very useful persons who, because of their personalities and their wide experience, are frequently asked to give advice, which they do in accordance with the knowledge they have gained at first hand, and not in accordance with facts gained from a study of the field as a whole. Such people are good to have around; and when we call them "amateurs," the term is not a disparaging one, because this is all they claim to be. If they are wise and sincere people—and they usually are—they can give real help in dealing with problems that fall within their scope of experience and that are not too complicated.

Not many of us go to a physician every time we cut a finger or have a headache. We keep home remedies in our medicine cabinet and doctor simple ailments ourselves. In other aspects of living, we can, in the same way, profit from our own and others' experience. However, if our finger continues to bleed or does not heal promptly, or if our headache does not cease, we seek a doctor's help; and in the

same way, when other troubles persist in spite of amateur help, then it is time to turn to a professional.

There is also the matter of professional ethics to be considered. Once a doctor accepts a patient, he is bound by the ethics of his profession to do all in his power to save that person's life, regardless of any personal animosity he may feel toward the other person and regardless of his own views as to the worth-whileness of the other's mode of living. In the same way, if a lawyer agrees to defend a man, he has to do all in his power to get his client cleared, whether he likes the man on closer acquaintanceship or not. This same standard of ethics holds true in counseling. If a counselor accepts a request for help, he must use all his knowledge and skill to aid the other person; his own needs, his personal attitudes toward the problems that the other may present, have to be kept out of the picture. Along with this goes the requirement that whatever is confided to a person whose professional aid is sought must be kept confidential. Doctors keep to themselves the facts concerning their patients; lawyers do the same for their clients; and the same rule holds for counselors.

Thus it would seem that the advice of our family and friends might be considered as the "home remedy" as far as solving personal problems is concerned. Doubtless, in many instances, we turn to our acquaintances first; and when the difficulty is simple and concrete, and falls within their experience, they are the ones to whom we should turn. They know us well and yet like us in spite of this, and we can believe that they at least mean well. For any problem that is very deep-seated, however, we have to seek assistance elsewhere, because those who are close to us become too in-

volved themselves. The very fact that they have a personal interest in the situation means that they cannot be impartial; and because they know us, they cannot help being biased by previous impressions. It is also true that we can never be as frank with acquaintances as we can with a person whose business it is to listen to stories such as ours. We cannot very well lay aside all defenses when talking to somebody with whom we have business or family relationships; or if we do, we are likely to spend many an uncomfortable moment wishing that we had not given away to the emotional crisis that led us thus to lay bare our inner beings. Nor are amateurs subject to the same strict rule with regard to keeping things confidential. Listening to secrets is not their lifework, and they did not ask to be intrusted with these confidences.

Another aspect of the matter should also be considered. Very often, we are not the only ones involved in our confidences. Usually, our confessions include information about others that should not be made public property, and we should think twice before exposing our friends and members of our family to those who know them well. Reticence in regard to intimate family affairs should be maintained, except when one is asking aid on family problems from somebody prepared to give the matter thoughtful consideration. Probably there is nothing lower than a man who regales his golf partners with a description of his wife's inadequacies in the bedroom, unless it be the woman who regales her bridge club with similar accounts about her husband.

Thus it can be said that the non-professional has a place in helping with advice in regard to problems we face, but

just as surely there are situations in which he should be definitely excluded.

The term "semi-professional" in relation to counseling has been used to designate members of other professions who have become interested in this field, and who have followed up their interest by making a study of it in so far as they have had the time and opportunity.

Perhaps most often it is ministers who, in their daily dealings with the troubled, come to see the need for more psychological knowledge than they got in the theological seminary (the more recent graduates are more likely to have had some such training), and so they set out to learn something about counseling. Their profession is still the ministry, but they read and attend institutes and conferences on the subject of how to counsel, and their status must be rated above that of the amateur. Similarly, doctors and lawyers may be led to concentrate somewhat on the counseling aspect of their professions because of something within their personality that makes the troubled seek them out.

Of course, the competence of semi-professionals varies widely, since there is as yet no standard for counselors and anybody may set himself up as one. Unless these aspirants have undertaken some special training, they would hardly qualify as even semi-professional, but the majority of them are deeply concerned with the wish to help and are anxious to get all the information they can gather as to the best way of going about it.

It is hard to generalize when speaking of such a heterogeneous group, but probably it is safe to say that most semi-professionals consider their main field that of prevention. They can give the young, the newly married, and the young

parent advice that will aid in the prevention of future difficulties, and they should be able to provide sound information about concrete problems with which people are frequently confronted.

Ordinarily, the semi-professionals make no attempt to deal with anything deeply rooted in the person's personality, and that is perhaps one of their most helpful attributes. If they cannot solve a problem, they know enough about human psychology not to run the risk of making things worse. They are careful not to tell people that they "should" do thus and thus, as the amateur is likely to do, because they realize that that is to run the risk of increasing the very burden of guilt that is causing trouble in the first place. Therefore, the person who does a great deal of counseling and takes his work seriously, even though he is not making a life career of it, can be of great assistance to those whose problems turn out to be too deeply rooted to be dislodged by any advice that he might give. He can diagnose the more serious difficulties, and he knows where the needed aid can be obtained.

For this reason, a person who finds his life not at all to his liking can do much worse than consult some professional person in whom he has confidence, such as his doctor or minister, if—and only if—the advisor has shown an interest in counseling and has kept himself up to date on methods of helping. If the advisor does not have this interest, he can help only with those problems that fall within his field, and not with more generalized or complex problems.

Usually, any work along this line done by persons in the community is carried by word of mouth or is written up in the local newspapers. One of the best tests to make in at-

tempting to establish the competence of semi-professional advisors is to find out whether they refer many of those coming to them for advice elsewhere for specialized help. If they try to handle all types of problems without aid from experts, then they are failing to recognize the serious nature of the difficulties of some of those who are turning to them for advice; they lack the ability to discriminate between those whom they can help and those who should be sent elsewhere.

It should go without saying that one needs to beware of charlatans, that never should one confide in soothsayers or untrained persons of any sort who set themselves up to treat human ills for a fee. In some places persons under such titles as "Master of Telepathy" or "Psychic Analyst" do flourishing businesses, while in others they are prohibited by law. All too often such persons gain their income from blackmail and other reprehensible practices.

For the sake of your own peace of mind and that of your family make sure of the integrity of the person whom you pick to bare your soul to. It is not often that there is any difficulty in verifying a counselor's honesty of purpose. An individual who is a member of one of the national organizations listed in the appendix of this book has a professional standing to maintain. In addition, he is usually employed or sponsored by some reputable group such as a church, school or university, social agency, department of the government, national organization, or body of local citizens. Whenever there is the slightest doubt about the good faith of a person setting himself up as a counselor, advice should be sought from a doctor or other professional person as to the man's qualifications.

In the next chapter we will discuss professional counselors, since we have to seek their help if our dissatisfaction with life does not yield to an attack by the intellect, armed with adequate information.

CHAPTER VII

There Is Help to Be Had

ALICE finds that the bonds of affection between her husband and herself are dissolving, in spite of all that she and her friends have done to try to put her marriage on a sounder footing. Bob realizes that he is not getting the kick out of living that he used to; his job is a bore, and he finds that his wife and children get on his nerves, although he does not know why. Clara is brought suddenly face to face with the fact that she has reached an age when her chances of marrying are slim, and since she had based all her plans for living on the assumption that she would sometime marry, she feels completely at sea. In each case, the advice of well-wishers has not helped; and each knows that, for him, his problem is a serious one. All three want to know where to get the expert assistance they need.

We should consider the doctor the first line of defense when life goes wrong. In such instances, what we need is not a specialist but a doctor who will consider us as a whole, and not think of us as an animated body, each part of which can be examined and treated by itself. We want a physician who understands the effect such things as the glands can have on our sense of well-being. Certainly those in trouble should avoid medical men whose immediate advice is to "go home and forget it," something the patient would give anything to do if only he knew how. Nor do we want a

doctor who thinks that, because he charges an examination fee, he is in honor bound to find something radically wrong with us. Even if the treatment or medicine that he prescribes is perfectly harmless, we are wasting time in not having gotten at the basis of the trouble.

What we want, therefore, is a physician who will advise us to look further for our difficulty when he cannot find anything physically wrong. All too often patients do not adequately appreciate those doctors who are not ashamed to say: "I am not certain." Yet a little thought would make us realize that it would be impossible for any man, regardless of his training and experience, to be sure about anything as complex as the cause of breakdowns within the human personality. A willingness to work on the problem and an open mind as to what the results will be are the best that we can ask, since, even if an acute physical ailment is found, we cannot know whether it was the basis of our trouble until it is cleared up.

Finally, we want, above all, a doctor who makes use of the services of other experts, who has an understanding of the nature of "misery" that is not based on an obvious bodily condition, and so will refer patients to specialists in other fields who might be able to give more aid than he is able to give. The newer trend in medicine is to ground physicians firmly in this knowledge of the importance of the emotional state, so that they will not think of the patient as a conglomeration of organs and tissue.

Therefore, judgment should be used in picking a doctor; one should learn his background and his interest in the total person, as well as his proficiency in treating the body. Above all, choose a doctor in whom you have confidence,

and then follow his advice. It is obviously a waste of time and energy to go to a doctor for an examination and then refuse to pay any attention to what he says.

If the trouble seems to be that there is an involved emotional upset, the doctor may wish to refer the patient to a psychiatrist, a medical practitioner who has specialized in mental disturbances. Unfortunately, the term "psychiatrist" has come to have unpleasant associations in the public mind, and sometimes otherwise intelligent people will refuse to be referred to one. This situation has come about apparently because psychiatrists are concerned with the treatment of insanity, which is after all a disease.

The laws of our land were drawn up during a period when insanity was considered more a crime than an illness; and as a result, in too many of our states, a person's sanity is still determined in the law court. We would hoot at the idea that twelve men, tried and true, should determine whether a person had tuberculosis and so should be sent to a sanatorium, and yet a jury trial would be just as logical in such instances as in determining mental soundness. In time, we shall all realize this, but meanwhile one defense that a criminal can put up is that he was not mentally competent at the time the crime was committed; and since this must be decided by the jury, it leads to both sides hiring psychiatrists to examine the prisoner, and the resulting conflicting testimony, as one learned psychiatrist contradicts another, makes the whole affair seem silly. Actually, it is not news that doctors disagree; if a criminal were excused from his crime on condition that he prove that he had tuberculosis, we should find the same lack of unanimity as one X-ray specialist after another stepped to the stand to give his opinion.

One of these days, it will probably be realized that the important thing is not a question of whether a person was "in possession of his faculties" at the time he committed a crime, but whether, in order to protect the community, he must be confined, and then what sort of treatment he should receive to enable him to resume his rightful place in society at the earliest possible moment. After all, considering all the hidden springs that motivate us, any one of us would have difficulty in proving conclusively that he knew why he was doing what he was doing at any moment of his life. We will find, when we focus on cure instead of revenge and turn the courts into scientific bodies to determine what is to be done for the well-being of society as a whole, including the patient at the bar, that there is surprising agreement as to the steps that should be taken.

It is amazing how many people undergoing emotional turmoil carry the fear within them that they may be insane. If advised to see a psychiatrist, they jump to the odd conclusion that they would then at once break forth into maniacal behavior. For this reason, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the business of a psychiatrist is to prevent insanity or to keep mild emotional disturbances from becoming more serious. Commitment to an institution is a last resort, and is the end result in only a small proportion of the cases known to psychiatrists.

Right here it should be said that if you think you are losing your mind, the chances are about a hundred to one that you are not—that is, unless you have been mentally out of gear before and so recognize the early symptoms. On the other hand, if you are sure that all the members of your family are insane and that everybody you come into

contact with outside is a dangerous lunatic who should be confined at once—in short, if you believe yourself to be the one sane person in an otherwise crazy world—then the quicker somebody gets you inside an insane hospital, the better. We have to remember that it takes a certain amount of mental clarity to discern mental quirks in ourselves. 10

Psychiatrists themselves vary widely in their interests. Some are concerned mainly with the physical elements influencing behavior, such as the condition of the nerve and brain tissue, and their approach is similar to that of the neurologist. On the other hand, there are those whose practice is made up almost entirely of patients who come for regular interviews in an effort to root out of their unconscious the hidden fears and drives that are making them miserable.

Thus, in picking a psychiatrist, the same principles hold as in picking other medical specialists. One should know the psychiatrist's background and his particular field of interest, and above all, it is necessary to find a person to whom one is not afraid to trust himself.

Perhaps the most intensive form of inner searching yet devised is that of the analyst. The term most frequently used is "psychoanalyst," though, strictly speaking, this refers only to those analysts who use the Freudian technique; those who follow other schools of psychiatric thought use different terms to designate themselves.

The principle back of psychoanalysis is not difficult to grasp. Most of us, at one time or another in our lives, have had an experience that seemed too frightful or shameful to talk about, the memory of which for a time would hang on the edge of consciousness, making us feel uncomfortable

whenever it intruded itself into our thoughts. Then one day, in a burst of confidence, we told somebody all about this thing that had happened to us. As we put it into words, we experienced something of the same emotion of fear or shame that we felt originally. Once it is told, especially if the listener is sympathetic but not particularly perturbed by our recital, the experience becomes drained of its high emotional content, remaining an unpleasant memory but nothing more.

Indeed, some people do not even have to have a listener to bring this about. They can ease themselves in the same way by writing down their difficulties, even if what they have written is to be immediately destroyed. Thus, when inflamed with anger against another person, they write a letter saying all the things they would like to tell that other person to his face, and then they can sleep peacefully, knowing perfectly well that their first act on awaking will be to burn the unread letter.

In psychoanalysis, this process is carried to the *n*th degree and is done under the guidance of a person highly trained in the understanding of the personality. We have seen how resentments and fears that were deeply buried in early childhood may later on lead to behavior that we find very awkward. In analysis, the patient goes back and digs up all those things so carefully forgotten and puts them into words, and it has been found that human beings can remember a lot more and back to a much earlier age than had been thought possible.

In an emotional sense, the person being psychoanalyzed relives these experiences, only this time he expresses his hatreds and dreads; he puts them into force verbally and,

of course, is not annihilated for admitting these things as he feared he would be as a child. Laid out in the open like this, his drives come under the control of his intellect and can no longer harass the individual from their secret lurking place.

The foregoing description may make the process of psychoanalysis seem much too simple, both for the analyst and the patient, when actually it is difficult for both. To get these hidden things out of the unconscious into the conscious takes great skill on the part of the psychoanalyst and determination on the part of his patient; it takes many hours of work, often extending over a period of a year or more; and it can be successful only when the desire of the patient to find the cause of his trouble is stronger than his fear of what he has stored away in the limbo of forgotten things.

The technique used is to facilitate the process of forgetting the present and reliving the past; and so well does it succeed that, emotionally, the analyst comes to stand in the place of the patient's parents—that is, his parents as they were when he was a child—and the patient finds himself feeling toward the psychoanalyst the way he previously felt toward them. There is, of course, no confusion on the level of the intellect; it is the old matter of association coming to light again. But it is something that can be handled only by a person trained in the art. The analyst is responded to, not as the person he is known to be, but as the person he has become when clothed in another's cast-off memories; and he is responded to, not by the adult before him, but by a combination of adult and revived child-that-was. Obviously, this becomes a very complicated situation.

To aid him in this business of delving, the psychoanalyst

uses such outward signs of subconscious drives as forgetfulness, slips of the tongue, and dreams.

We forget on purpose, whether we know it or not, thus hiding from ourselves something that we find unpleasant. Many times we lose something because we have an inner wish to be rid of it. All this is easily recognized in a general way. When a person repeatedly forgets our name, we have the feeling that it is because of some unpleasant association with us. We may be wrong, of course; the association may be entirely with the name itself. If a child consistently forgets to bring his schoolbooks home, we know that he has no liking for homework, although, consciously, he is making every effort to remember to put the books in his schoolbag.

When our tongue gets twisted and we put one word in place of another, it is not pure accident. The word thus placed in the sentence came there because of some association it had with something we were thinking about as we talked. It may or may not have been connected with what we were saying. By concentrating on such miswording (this, of course, does not include the misuse of words resulting from real lack of knowledge as to their meaning) and such outward proof of unspoken resentments as being late for appointments or forgetting them altogether, the analyst aids the person to dig out the things the individual wishes to get at and yet cannot make up his mind to mention.

The interpretation of dreams is a highly specialized matter that we cannot go into detail about here. The theory back of the meaning of dreams is that they are of the same nature as our daydreams, only that, since we take no responsibility for the former, they can be even more outspoken.

We become annoyed with somebody who gets the better of us and imagine a state of affairs in which we would have the upper hand over him, and then we feel better. That night we dream that we turn him over to cannibals, who cut him into ribbons and make soup out of him—a revenge too crude for us to permit ourselves to think up when daydreaming. Indeed, so shocking to our better self may be the things we act out in our dreams that we camouflage those taking part. Thus, instead of dreaming that we turned our enemy over to cannibals, we may dream that it was a black dog that was involved; because the first time we ever saw the man, he was accompanied by a black dog, which formed that association in our mind. We may even go so far as to dream the opposite of what we really mean, putting in a woman instead of a man and dreaming that we put up a ferocious struggle to save her from the cannibals, so as to save our conscience.

Although it has been found that certain symbols frequently stand for certain things in dreams, no person except the dreamer can ever know the meaning of any dream, for he alone holds the key to the associations put into play. However, a person who thinks that something is too shameful to tell the analyst may carefully dream the thing out in a form that he thinks will be recognized, and in this way he can tell what needs to be told without accepting any responsibility for the method of presentation. After all, it is but a dream that he is repeating.

It should be emphasized that it is only by knowing what meaning this sort of thing has for the person involved that one can draw conclusions. For example, when a girl manages to lose her engagement ring, we should be justified in

thinking that she was of two minds about going ahead with the marriage. We might be wrong, however, if we jumped to this conclusion. It could be that she disliked that particular ring, that the setting was not at all what she had always wanted, and yet that she could not make up her mind to hurt her fiancé's feelings by saying so. Her solution is to go swimming one day and, without conscious intent, to let the ring slip off her finger. Then she makes sure that she picks out the ring that replaces it. The true meaning of her action could be gained only from her, a thing that amateur analysts sometimes forget, professionals never.

For a person who needs or wishes to have the most thorough knowledge of himself that is possible, analysis is the answer. Whether it is the answer to the problems faced by the great bulk of troubled people is so far a moot question, since there are not enough psychoanalysts and the process is too long and too expensive for it to be available for some time to come, at least to any large number of people. Some of the changes in technique made by analysts of other schools of thought have been worked out in an effort to get the same results in a simpler manner. As time goes on, probably many more modifications will be tried.

If one wishes to go to an analyst, one should be sure that one picks a competent one. Not all analysts are doctors; and when they are not, it is well to ask a physician to determine the man's professional standing, since it is hard for those without knowledge of the field to be certain that they are choosing a reliable man.

Psychiatrists are members of the medical profession, but not all analysts are. Psychologists usually are not. Whereas the psychiatrist approaches the study of personality through

medicine, the psychologist approaches it through behavior. Why we do what we do is the psychologist's main interest. For example, persons in this profession study how we learn, how we form useful associations, and the methods by which we learn best. From working out rules that will aid efficient learning for the majority, the psychologist moves on to study the problems of the individual for whom the rules do not seem to work. This gets him into the counseling field.

"Psychologist" is a very inclusive term, just like "doctor." Generally included are the psychometrists, whose business it is to give tests that rate an individual's learning ability in accordance with that of others of the same age and background. Others give tests that help the individual determine what his natural aptitudes are, so that he can make a more intelligent choice of occupation. Still others specialize in working with children who do not adjust in the school or the home, and this immediately brings them in contact with the children's parents, since that is where the trouble usually lies.

Thus the service rendered by a psychiatrist and a psychologist may, in certain instances, be very similar indeed, but it has to be kept in mind that the psychologist ordinarily has no medical training, so that, in treating a person who is emotionally upset to any degree, he will insist on a psychiatric examination if it can be obtained, a medical examination in any case. Only when no physical basis is found will he attempt to aid in the solution of the problem.

How important it is not to neglect the physical examination is shown in the following case:

Howard Hayes was a boy of twelve who, previously a model student, suddenly became one of the school's biggest

problems. He was very restless and played truant. Brought to school by his father, he would soon leave again, and nothing that the school or the parents did would make him remain. He was found to have normal intelligence, and a physical examination by the school physician revealed none of the ailments that might be expected, such as kidney infection or early diabetes. The boy himself insisted that he did not know what was wrong. He denied disliking his teacher or having any desire to go anywhere else in particular when he ran away. He stated that he simply found it impossible to sit still. After fifteen or twenty minutes of trying to remain in a chair, the agony would become so great that he would even jump out of second-floor windows to get away. He added that he felt all right but just could not be still; the parents reported that he was the same way at home, not sitting at the table long enough to eat a meal.

It seemed apparent that the cause of the boy's behavior was hidden from himself. He had a stepmother who, it seemed, had been overly anxious that the boy should make an outstanding academic record, and this suggested that the difficulty might lie in the antagonism between the two. Certainly, the boy's behavior had the result of greatly mortifying his stepmother, who was the one who had to confer with the truant officer and school authorities. Before trying to work out a lessening of tension between the boy and his mother, however, the school psychologist had the boy taken to a psychiatric clinic, as part of the routine, and there it was found that he suffered from a rather rare and comparatively mild glandular disturbance, the main symptom of which was extreme restlessness. After a series of glandular treatments, he became his old self again. How futile and

cruel would have been a series of interviews held with a boy who needed medical treatment!

It is seldom difficult to prove the reliability of professional helpers. Physicians, psychiatrists, and most analysts are members of the national and local medical associations. Psychologists are members of one of the national psychological associations, and are frequently licensed, as are the medical practitioners. Family counselors are not often licensed; but, as we shall see, they too have their own professional organizations.

CHAPTER VIII

The Family Counselor

FAMILY counseling as a full-time occupation is something new, and it has come into being because of an insistent demand on the part of the troubled for expert help. What happened was that certain understanding people who were in a position to come into contact with the emotionally upset—people such as doctors, lawyers specializing in domestic-relation cases, ministers, and social workers—found many turning to them for counseling services. Some of these individuals began to consider this type of work as their main interest, and they became known as “family counselors.” This term is used to differentiate this type of counseling from other specialized forms, such as vocational counseling.

Thus, a minister may become so interested in the art of aiding other individuals that he gives up his pastoral duties altogether to devote himself to the study of the human personality and to counseling. Or, a doctor may give up his practice to serve, usually in a clinic, as an advisor to people in trouble. Or, again, a teacher, especially a teacher of psychology or allied subjects, may find practice more alluring than theory and perhaps become a dean whose duties are not administrative but rather that of aiding worried students. It is the type of work done rather than the particular

title held that determines whether a person is or is not a family counselor.

Unless a person has an income of his own, which is not usually the fact, he must find some way of making a living from his new profession. He may receive fees for his services or earn an income by writing or lecturing, or he may be supported by some foundation or agency interested in providing this sort of service for the members of the community. Since many of those badly in need of counseling are financially unable to pay for it, many communities support agencies that give expert advice on family and personal problems free, or for a nominal fee.

At the present time, a majority of family counselors are persons who have been trained as social workers. It would be expected that social workers, dealing with the economically dependent and the socially maladjusted, would be among the first to find it necessary to learn how to help those who were finding life a very heavy burden. In order to make this clearer, it might be well to review briefly the development of social work in recent years.

Since the dawn of history, and undoubtedly before, human beings have helped one another. Gradually, philanthropy has come to mean primarily the giving by the fortunate to the unfortunate, especially the giving by the economically independent to the poor. During the frontier period, this was done generally on a neighbor-to-neighbor basis. A man's crop was ruined, and neighbors gave him supplies to last through the winter. A man became ill, and neighbors tended his crop in addition to their own until he could work again. When industrialization set in, this kind of help was no longer practicable. The poor were in one part of the

city, the rich in another, and there was no natural day-by-day contact between them. Then it was that organizations were set up with the purpose of seeing to it that children were not left homeless, that people did not starve.

At first, volunteers carried food and clothing to those who seemed unable to feed and clothe themselves, but it soon developed that good intentions were not enough. It was not merely a matter of giving to those who lacked the necessities of life; it was found that there were good ways of giving and bad ways, and that to hand a man groceries with one hand and take away his self-respect and ambition with the other was of doubtful advantage to the individual or the community. The receiving of financial assistance by means of personal appeals to the more fortunate was found to be the most demoralizing of all.

Gradually, therefore, agencies were organized with trained personnel to serve the poor. Those whose condition fell in a certain category would be helped, and the emphasis was placed on the applicant's proof of this need, rather than on his emotional appeal. This made the relationship more businesslike and was less pauperizing, and it became apparent that the mere giving of relief did not touch the root of the problem, that the applicants needed much more than material relief. Some could become self-sustaining if given skillful help, while others needed equally skilled aid for themselves and their families on their new level of dependence if they were not to sink from dependence to an anti-social mode of living. Therefore, serving the poor was no longer considered merely a pastime of the rich, but one that should be performed by a trained person as a full-time job. Volunteers could not handle the job alone, and case workers

manned the family-welfare agencies, which were generally supported by community chests.

Then came the great depression, and those needing material help increased by leaps and bounds, far beyond the ability of private philanthropy to handle. No longer could unemployment be considered a result of the physical, mental, or emotional maladjustment of the individual. Something had gone wrong with the economic system's distribution of goods and work, and the community accepted the fact of its responsibility to care for the victims. Public agencies, supported by tax funds, on national, state, and local levels, took over the greatest portion of the burden of keeping the poor alive.

The private family agencies supported by voluntary gifts, then turned more and more to that which had come to interest them above everything else and which still remained as an unmet need in the community, namely, counseling for the troubled, regardless of their economic status. The private agencies still retained many of their old functions; they gave relief in instances where an individual's need could not be met by the comparatively inflexible regulations imposed by the laws governing the public agencies, but they considered it their primary service to the community to offer skilled aid to parents concerned about their children, to couples unable to make of their life together all they wanted it to be, to those facing any kind of burden heavier than they could bear.

Although this has been the general line of progress, situations vary widely in different communities. In some, the feeling has been that those who find themselves dependent upon charity face such personal defeat that they need the

most skilled help, and the tax-supported agencies extend this to them by having on their staffs case workers well trained in the understanding of human psychology. In other communities, the private family agency may be a medium through which the wealthy give to the poor, little but material goods being passed on.

Thus the term "case worker" may be applied to a person who, by training and experience, is actually only an investigator; one who knows the laws setting up various relief programs and how to determine, on legal grounds, whether a person fits into them or not. The term may also be applied to someone well versed in psychological principles and psychiatric concepts whose concern is with the individual's satisfaction with life and whose method of treatment approximates that of the psychologist much more closely than that of her fellow case worker, whose business is only to investigate.

Perhaps at this point it should be explained that social workers are divided into case workers, group workers, and a miscellaneous group made up of researchers, community organizers, administrators, and so forth. This latter group is composed of those with social-work training who go into research or who become interested in organizing social agencies efficiently, and they are similar to researchers or organizers in any other field. Group workers are generally associated with recreation programs. Most people can appreciate the sort of service they offer by thinking of what the Y.M.C.A.'s and the Y.W.C.A.'s provide for a community. A group leader deals with a number of persons of the same age, sex, or interest; and to enable everyone to get out of the experience what he needs will require all the skill that

the leader can get through training and experience. The case worker is a social worker who deals with individuals, either alone or as members of a family group. There are many kinds of case workers; in addition to those connected with private and public family agencies, there are those connected with industrial establishments and hired by the management, those who work with patients in clinics or hospitals (called "medical social workers"), those who work entirely under the guidance of a psychiatrist (called "psychiatric social workers"), and those connected with the schools (generally called "visiting teachers").

Indeed, to say that somebody is doing social work tells very little about the kind of work in which he is engaged, and that is the reason the term "family counselor" is being used to designate those case workers who are trained in this field, as well as members of other professions who have made themselves proficient in this business of helping others. When we use the word "proficient," we are not thinking merely of training—of academic instruction in the fundamentals of human psychology, and a knowledge of resources and how to use them—important as all that is. We include a genuine liking for people because they are people and, most important of all, a strict discipline of the self.

It is self-discipline more than any one characteristic that distinguishes the amateur from the professional counselor. As an illustration: Suppose you have a bad day at the office and have an unpleasant difference of opinion with your boss. You retreat to lick your wounds and run across an old friend, and you tell him all about it. He is sympathetic, and you feel better for having told him. Indeed, he himself has a grudge against your boss, and he tells you some stories

illustrating the man's conceit. When you part, you both have gained satisfaction from the discussion, but it is unlikely that you have made much progress in understanding the basis of the difficulty between yourself and your boss. That was not your friend's purpose in listening; he encouraged your recital because he, too, had feelings that he wanted to relieve.

In the illustration just cited, two people were airing their problems. This is something the family counselor must not do. Of course he has his own problems and prejudices, but they must not be imposed on those persons seeking help from him as a professional person. Mutual sharing of burdens is a human characteristic that we hope will never disappear from the earth, but it is not counseling. To render the kind of help that counseling implies, the problem of the one who is seeking aid must be the focus of attention for both. Counseling is not a matter of working out a good life philosophy and then gaining converts to it. In fact, it is much easier to explain what counseling is not than what it is; and because of the self-discipline that it imposes, most training programs require that a period of counseling under the strict supervision of one experienced in the art must be completed before the newcomer is admitted into the profession. This period of training corresponds to that of internship in training to be a doctor.

Exactly what sort of help can one expect from a counselor? There is such a wide variety of problems that the kind of aid naturally must vary widely too, but it can be roughly classified.

Information pertaining to simple educational, vocational, and social problems might be listed first. Confronted with a

concrete problem, one may simply not know what resources there are for meeting it. Here are some examples:

(1) A young man is in an automobile wreck, and the result is blindness. He cannot follow the trade for which he was trained. Does the community have a training program for the blind; can he be taught some trade in which he can earn a living?

(2) One child in a large family turns out to have a lower level of mentality than her brothers and sisters, although it is not so low as to make it necessary to send her to an institution for the feeble-minded. Yet, at home, she may be becoming sensitive and withdrawn because she senses her inferiority, and also her influence on her younger, brighter brother may be bad. Is there available a school for such borderline children, who can progress as far as high school if given time, where she would be with her equals and could be taught a trade that would enable her to be self-supporting? Just because she, grammar-school material, happened to be born into a family whose other members are Ph.D. material is no reason why she should not have a chance at a happy life.

(3) Late in the spring, a family with a fourteen-year-old girl moves into a strange city. The church to which they belong has no young people's groups meeting during the summer, and the girl is lonesome. Are there any clubs or organizations for young girls in her immediate neighborhood?

A stream of such questions flows in, some people asking for information for themselves, others wanting it in order to help out somebody else. Not that the counselor can an-

swer them all right off the bat—far from it (attorneys, you know, usually consult their books before answering questions of law); but it is his business to know where he or the inquirer can find out what he wants to know. Knowing where resources are to be found is an important part of the equipment of the advisor in any community.

Or, the person may want advice on some concrete problem. The mother of the child with borderline mentality may not have reached the point of deciding to send the girl to a school. She may come to ask the counselor what should be done, her decision being determined primarily by what facilities there are for the child's training elsewhere. Possibly the mother has accepted the statement of some school-teacher that the girl is of low mentality, not realizing that this can be determined only by scientific testing in the hands of an expert; and she may not know that antagonism to school, if strong enough, can give the false appearance of lack of intelligence. The counselor can open up additional approaches to a problem that the other person has had no reason to study thoroughly up to now.

In such cases, the help given is advice that grows out of a wide knowledge of the subject which deals with how to go about doing things that the other person has already made up his mind to do; and it does not impose the counselor's opinions upon the other. As we have said before, this advice-giving will not be helpful if the person is actually of two minds about what he wants to do; often, however, people do have their plans all drawn up, but do not know how to put them into effect.

Again, it may be diagnostic service that is wanted. The person may not know exactly where his problem lies; or, if he at first thinks he knows, as soon as he begins talking

about it, he realizes that he does not. He knows that he wants it solved; but he cannot even make plans for solving it until he determines, at least roughly, what the nature of the problem is. To go back to the mother-and-daughter illustration that we have been using, it might be that the woman would not come in and say that she had a girl with low intelligence. She might come in about her daughter, saying that she was a problem both at home and at school, picked on her younger brother, showed antagonism to all the family, and refused to study or attend school regularly. The counselor's job would then be to point out that the difficulty could be the result of physical, mental, or emotional factors, singly or combined; and he would have to know where the facilities were for attacking the situation from these three angles. It would be up to him to make sure that each expert who examined the child knew what the symptoms were and what other examiners had found in the situation. The discovery that the child was mentally deficient might come as a complete surprise to a family that had considered her "just mean."

If the child was not found to be ill, lacking in intelligence, or so emotionally upset as to be a subject for psychiatric treatment, then the problem would fall within that of emotional maladjustment, and it is the treatment of this type of problem that we most frequently think of when we speak of counseling. If the difficulty is in the child's relationship to her parents, it will be almost impossible to bring about any marked improvement, unless the adults increase their understanding of both themselves and the child. This is the sort of help that cannot be given in just one or two interviews.

Possibly at this point we should make clear the difference

between counseling and psychoanalysis. The former concerns itself, not with bringing the unconscious up into conscious thought, but merely with enabling the person to reconcile conflicts within himself that are quite near the surface, if they are hidden at all. The past is not relived, though it may be thoroughly discussed in terms of its obvious influence on the present. The psychoanalyst may concern himself entirely with the individual and, in working for the growth of the person's own personality, ignore to a large degree his social and family relationships. The counselor keeps closer to the whole situation. He will continue to give advice and aid with concrete problems, and possibly be helping several members of a family at the same time.

Psychoanalysis and counseling are not different degrees of the same process but are separate skills, and the upheavals associated with the inner renovation brought about by psychoanalysis should no more be handled by a counselor than should conditions of acute physical illness. The counselor's field is broad enough so that he need not encroach on that of others.

As an example of the help a family counselor can give in problems of acute domestic difficulty, we cite the Ingersoll case:

Mrs. Ingersoll came to see the case worker because a neighbor had told her that the agency provided counseling service. Mrs. Ingersoll started right in on her story, stating that, although she and her husband had been married twenty-two years and had six children, they agreed about nothing. She was a native American and a Protestant; he a Mexican, who had been in this country only a few days at the time of the wedding, and a Catholic. She had grown

up in a small New England village; he had always lived in a city.

The young couple had known each other only twenty-four hours before they eloped, after having met in a strange city where both were visiting relatives. She had just broken with the boy she had expected to marry, and he had just been turned down by the girl he had counted on making his wife. His people did not like her, and her people did not like him; and both had always been devoted to their families. After their marriage, they had moved to a Pacific Coast city, where neither had friends or relatives.

Religion had always meant a great deal to both of them; and after their marriage, each had tried unsuccessfully to convert the other, until religion became such a bone of contention that they both stopped going to church, each blaming the other for this defection. The nervous tension in the home and the continual disagreement between the parents naturally had a bad effect on the children, several of whom were reported by the teacher as highly nervous. Mrs. Ingersoll had never had any outlets outside the home since she had been in the city, and her lack of knowledge of what was going on in the world was surprising in one of her intelligence. She had become so wrapped up in her troubles that she had lost all interest in everything outside the home where the struggle between her husband and her took place. For a number of years, she had been suffering from headaches, but had not sought medical attention because she could not pay a doctor and knew nothing about clinics.

Several concrete things could be done. Mrs. Ingersoll was helped to become associated again with a woman's group in which she had been quite active as a girl, and thus an out-

let was found for some of her energy. The oldest boy, who had been about to drop out of school because he could not buy his books, was given a chance to work part time. Mrs. Ingersoll was referred to a clinic, where it was found that she needed glasses and dental work, both of which were obtained for her. While at the clinic, she saw a psychiatrist, who found no symptoms of any serious personality disturbance. Mr. Ingersoll came to see the case worker and talked of the difficulties from his point of view.

Mrs. Ingersoll stoutly maintained that she was going to leave her husband as soon as the children were grown, that she stayed with him now merely because she was economically dependent upon him. She was a large blonde, with a fiery temper, and when she came in to see the case worker one day after a violent quarrel, saying that one of these days she would kill her husband, it appeared that she believed what she was saying. She had hit him over the head that day, and talked of what her committing murder would mean to her children, becoming quite hysterical in the end.

She was provided with a practical plan for leaving her husband if she wished to do so. Although this was not recommended, it was pointed out that this would be a more logical way out than murder. Her response was to raise various objections to the plan proposed, and the real difficulties that she brought up were conceded, while solutions were offered for the others. Instead of giving way to her emotions, Mrs. Ingersoll began to weigh the pros and cons of remaining with her husband.

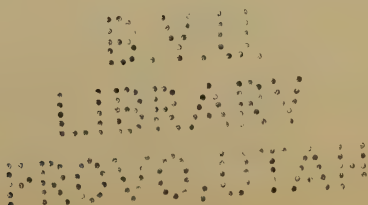
Mrs. Ingersoll did not make up her mind at once as to what she wanted to do. She came back several times to talk with the case worker. She faced the fact that it would

be hard for her to bring up six children on her own and that the decision was hers to make—that she did have a choice as to what she would do with her life.

Finally, she began to find some good points in her husband. He did not drink or abuse the children; he brought his money home, and his interests were there. If he was disagreeable when he got home at night, she thought that perhaps he had reason after working all day long at a job that he did not particularly like. She went even further, saying that he was so devoted to the children that she thought it might kill him if she took them from him. She knew that he must be devoted to her, too, or he would have left her long ago after the way they had quarreled the past few years. She came to see for herself that her husband had put up with a good deal.

In the end, she said, although their marriage had been a mistake in the first place, that had been her fault as much as his. They had lived together now for twenty-two years and had six children, and the thing to do was to make the most of their life together. The children would be grown after a while, and they would have nobody left but each other; and she planned to do her part toward finding a basis on which they could build a contented family life.

It must be made clear that the case worker did not know whether the woman would leave her husband or not; or, if she did leave him, whether she would return to him. The important thing was that she should be given a choice, should feel that she had some say-so as to the sort of life she would lead. Then she could find out what she really wanted to do; and when her mind was made up, she could



put an end to the constant friction in the house, which was so bad for her husband, herself, and particularly for the children. For years, she had made herself believe that she lived with her husband only because she would starve if she left him; offered an alternative, she faced her own inconsistency and grew in ability to handle her problem.

On the other hand, if the psychiatrist had believed that the difficulty was due to an intense unconscious need on the part of Mrs. Ingersoll to be a martyr in her own and others' eyes, then he would have recommended a different kind of help for her; because if that had been the core of the problem, every attempt to open ways for her to improve her lot would have made her all the more determined to prove that hers was a miserable lot. It would be up to a psychiatrist or an analyst to treat a personality defect as deep-seated as that, although the counselor could still help the woman with concrete suggestions and with problems not entangled in her desire to play the martyr.

Another type of help that a counselor gives is that of consultation, the giving of advice to those who themselves find it necessary to deal with others who are in trouble. Thus ministers may turn to a counselor for information as to where to refer those in need of some specialized service; teachers may wish to know how best to help children who present certain kinds of symptoms. Just as the counselor consults with physicians and psychologists, so do members of other professions consult with him.

Some counselors also give specialized aid in connection with the organization for which they work. Case workers hired by a court may have special legal functions to perform; those working within a hospital or clinic may give

service related to that rendered by the institution employing them. All this is in addition to the counseling function, because if it were not included, the person could not rightly be called "a counselor."

A great majority of family advisors work as staff members of an agency, which makes it important to know what types of agencies generally have such services available. Social agencies are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

Social Agencies

SOME counselors have entered private practice, setting out to earn a living from the fees they collect for their services. This tendency may spread in the near future; however, at present, most counselors are hired by some organization that, in turn, is often supported by public donations. Thus, in order to know where counseling services are available in a community, it is necessary to know what agencies exist there.

First, we might ask what sort of organizations are likely to provide such a service, and we find that they are of many types. We have already mentioned that private and public family-service agencies may have counselors on their staffs, but a community often has more than one of each type of agency. Generally, the privately supported family agencies are divided along religious lines, provided there is more than one agency in a community. Thus there may be one agency for the Catholics and another for those of the Jewish faith, and perhaps a third that is non-sectarian, serving members of all faiths. All three in any one community may provide counseling; or one or more may instead be concerned with some other community function, such as providing emergency aid for the poor; or several functions

may be combined by one agency, which is the usual arrangement. Sometimes private agencies are classified on the basis of race rather than religious faith.

Public agencies are classified, not according to the race or religion of those applying, but according to the type of relief given. Instead of one large agency handling all types of relief work, some communities have an agency to aid each type of applicant: one for the aged, another for mothers who have no means of support for their children, a third for the blind, a fourth for persons unable to work, and a fifth for the unemployed. One or more of these agencies may have on its staff persons equipped to help with other than financial problems those who need aid. If they are not so equipped, or if their work is so heavy that they must rush through it as fast as possible and so cannot take time to counsel with people, good standards of practice would require that they refer troubled persons to some agency that is in a position to give this service, if there is such a one in the community.

Then again, in addition to agencies supported by the community chest and giving their service free, there may be some agencies, partially supported by the chest or endowments, that charge a fee graduated according to the ability of the applicant to pay. These agencies, which go under various names—such as Family Councils and Bureaus of Family Relationships—are a comparatively new development in the field of social work, and they show the trend toward recognition of the importance of counseling, which is generally their sole function. Other agencies may or may not have the type of service of which we have been speaking; it is necessary to get information about the individual

agency in order to find out, since in different communities agencies with the same name may offer many differing services.

There are many other places where counselors may be found at work in a community. A mental-hygiene or psychological clinic may use counselors, who work in conjunction with psychiatrists and psychologists; and so may social-hygiene clinics that specialize in giving advice to those approaching marriage. On the other hand, a mental-hygiene clinic may be merely a place where mental examinations are given, especially to school children; and the social-hygiene association may devote itself entirely to an educational campaign about venereal diseases. It is necessary to find out about the local set-up in order to know. Children's agencies, such as child-guidance centers and child-placing organizations, may have experts to aid the troubled parents as well as the troubled child. Vocational services and employment offices may have on their staffs trained persons to help those whose job adjustment is made difficult by their own inner discord.

Group-work agencies, such as settlement houses or Y.M.C.A.s, may have a case worker available for those who wish counseling with deep-seated problems. Agencies that deal with the transient may offer the temporarily homeless skilled aid with their problems, and institutions such as hospitals and sanitariums, orphanages and reformatories, and homes for unmarried mothers may give counseling service to inmates who wish it. It would seem that counseling could never be more socially useful than when provided in prisons.

Courts use case workers, especially in the juvenile, parole,

and probation divisions. Schools use them to visit the homes of children who are a problem in the schoolroom, the aim being to find the difficulty that is making for an unhappy childhood; and colleges use them as student advisors. Not only do religious bodies sponsor family agencies, as we have seen, but individual churches may set up counseling services; these are generally intended primarily for church members, but any troubled person may be welcome.

The field that has particularly interested the Church is that of preparation for marriage. Many ministers have come to believe that it is not enough merely to officiate at a ceremony and make a couple man and wife; they feel that their responsibility goes further. There are courses and institutes sponsored by churches that train the young for marriage, and ministers try to determine before the wedding whether both man and woman are going into marriage with serious forethought and adequate information. Usually, the help given is on a semi-professional level, with referral elsewhere when professional advice is obviously needed; but the expert may be on the church staff itself. The theory back of this interest of the Church is the sound one that the way to tackle the divorce problem is to prevent poor marriages.

Another field in which counselors may be employed is personnel work. A greatly troubled person cannot be so efficient an employee as one who does not find life quite such a burden. The personnel worker generally concentrates upon making the job adjustment a happy one, since to train a person and then keep him a square peg in a round hole, or to lay him off and train somebody else when the first man could have been happily fitted into another job, has

been found to be an expensive procedure, both from the human and the financial standpoint. In order to help a person find joy in his work, it is necessary, not only to be able to give vocational guidance in the strict sense of the term, but also to have enough understanding of the human being to know what it is that he really wants from his job; and this is often quite difficult to determine, especially since the man himself may not know what is making him so dissatisfied.

All this might make it appear that a lot of people are having counseling forced upon them, so perhaps at this point it should be made clear that, by its very essence, the type of counseling of which we have been speaking cannot be foisted upon anyone. Such counseling, to be effective, requires the active participation of the person to whom help is being offered, and nobody can be forced to accept help who does not want it. Of course, it is true that circumstances may make a person more anxious for help than he would otherwise be; thus a person who previously had not been willing to accept help with his troubles may decide to do so if he sees that his inner tensions are affecting him to the extent that his job is endangered or that he is getting into trouble with the courts. However, although outward compliance with concrete advice can be thus enforced, the inner change at which true counseling aims can never be attained by the exertion of pressure.

Perhaps a word should be said about "Advice to the Lovelorn" columns in newspapers and similar radio programs. The popularity of such methods of getting help with personal problems proves the great need for counseling that is felt by many people. Those who are responsible for ad-

ministering advice to the perplexed in this wholesale manner are generally conscientious people who take their responsibility seriously, but who do not have the necessary training, and so lack insight into the complicating factors in a situation. Usually, only the most obvious meaning of statements is recognized, and all other possibilities are ignored. Generalized advice, even when sound, may be harmful where a particular situation is not thoroughly understood. Sometimes, however, experts do give advice by letter, recognizing the limitations in the method and knowing that no serious maladjustment is going to be solved by correspondence, and yet believing that they can still be of help to the troubled primarily by telling them about sources from which they can get personal counseling. No reputable doctor would attempt to diagnose by mail; yet, if one of his patients was in a place where it was impossible for him to reach a physician, the doctor could prescribe in a letter things that would perhaps lessen certain symptoms and that, at least, would do no harm. Even this, however—being sure that the advice prescribed can do no harm—requires an extensive knowledge of medicine. The same principle holds in the field of counseling.

From the foregoing brief summary of the sort of organizations and enterprises with which counselors may be connected, it is easy to see that, fundamentally, counselors are acting as agents to an extent that is not true of those practicing such professions as law and medicine. A doctor may become resident surgeon of a hospital and therefore its agent, and a lawyer may become a patent attorney for a large corporation; but in every community there are those who remain in private practice. In social work, this is

reversed. Agencies are set up to perform certain functions, and then such trained persons as are believed to be needed are hired. For this reason, when one seeks a counselor, the important thing to find out, in the majority of instances, is the purpose served by the agencies in the community, a purpose that the staff members have been engaged to fulfill.

In towns of any size, the Council of Social Agencies, or a similar body, usually issues a directory of social organizations. If this body does not, then the Chamber of Commerce should have such a list. Community set-ups are so different that it is difficult to generalize; but in the large majority of instances, the private family agency—where there is one—probably comes as near to being the general practitioner of social work as any agency can.

Those who do not understand the differences between social agencies often seek help in places as unsuitable as a dentist's office would be for a man needing his eyes examined. Of course, a well-trained practitioner, be he doctor or social worker, will direct a person to a source where he can obtain the help he needs; but because social workers may not be well trained, it is much safer to be sure that the agency that is first approached is one which has shown, by the work it has done, that its staff has a true conception of the nature of counseling.

Although it is the standards of the agency that generally will be of greatest interest to a person seeking help, something should be said about those for staff members. Doctors must secure licenses to practice, and lawyers must pass bar examinations; but, because counseling is a much younger profession, no such generally accepted standards are in

effect for counselors. There has already been some experimenting in the field of licensing social workers, and those who work in public agencies under civil service have to show a certain amount of proficiency. This, however, usually has to do with the understanding of laws regarding eligibility for relief and such matters, rather than of the art of counseling itself.

However, social work already has acquired some of the same safeguards that the other professions have. Schools providing adequate courses in the subject are accepted as members of the American Association of Schools of Social Work, and the American Association of Social Workers is the national professional organization in this field. Agencies and individuals particularly interested in the family-welfare aspect of social service may be members of the Family Welfare Association of America.

Finally, there are full-time marriage or family counselors who have not been trained as social workers, doctors, or psychologists. Usually, they are teachers, home economists, ministers, or persons in other allied fields whose interest in counseling has grown out of their jobs. However, there is at least one course of study, sponsored jointly by the University of North Carolina and Duke University, that trains persons specifically in the field of marriage counseling and the teaching of marriage classes.

Nor are counselors who lack other affiliations without professional organizations. They may be members of such associations as the National Conference of Social Work, the Conference on Conservation of Marriage and the Family, and The National Conference on Family Relations.

Counselors should, of course, have specialized in courses

in psychology and the social sciences, and should know enough about physical and mental diseases to be able to recognize when a person is in need of medical treatment. Above all, the counselor must be one who has learned something about the art of helping, who knows how to assist others to grow, and who has been taught to keep his personal prejudices and feelings out of the picture as much as is humanly possible.

Unless one was familiar with the type of instruction given at a particular institution, one could not know whether graduates of that institution were adequately trained to be counselors or not. Even if a student specialized in psychology and the social sciences, his knowledge might be limited to the intriguing tricks that white mice can be taught in a laboratory and to the peculiar customs followed by African savages. Interesting as such subjects can be, they are not preparation for the job of dealing with troubled human beings.

Thus it is difficult for a layman to evaluate the competence of a counselor. His title—be it social worker, minister, doctor, or psychologist—does not in itself indicate whether a person does counseling; or, if he does, what type of problem he works with. The time may come when all those who advise the troubled will consider themselves to be family counselors, but at present counselors work under many different labels.

Ordinarily, the best way for a person to pick a counselor is to judge his work according to the standards set by the group or organization that hires or sponsors him. They will stand back of what he does, and their standards are usually known or can be discovered. If further information about

the counselor is wanted, one can secure it from some person with professional standing in the field.

Another thing involved is the personalities of those concerned, just as in the relationship between doctor and patient. Some persons think that they could talk to a man only, or to a woman only, as the case may be; or that they could not discuss intimate facts about themselves with an unmarried advisor. As a matter of fact, in most instances these factors are not so important as they are thought to be, and it is the skill of the counselor rather than his sex or marital status that makes it possible for him to be helpful.

Once one has determined that a counselor is trained in the field, the problem of finding out what type of difficulty he is expert in meeting should not be hard to solve. One can follow the simplest method of getting the facts: talking with him personally. If he is not able to help in the situation, he will know where the needed advice can be obtained.

Misconceptions

UNTIL recently, there were some who had the curious idea that counselors should function much as fortune-tellers, giving out a lot of advice and asking for a minimum of information. Actually, counselors should ask for a lot of information and give a minimum of advice, since it is better to say nothing until one has a thorough understanding of all that is involved in the problem being discussed.

If we should walk into the office of a strange doctor to complain of severe and frequent headaches, and the doctor gave one casual glance, announced that the trouble was due to dyspepsia, handed out a few pills, and dismissed us, we should never return to that doctor—or, at least, it is to be hoped that we should not. We all know that headaches can be caused by too many things to be that lightly dismissed. We would expect to be tested for eyestrain, sinus infection, kidney trouble, high blood pressure, glandular maladjustment, and brain tumor; we would expect to be asked how long we had been suffering from the headaches, whether they were periodic or connected with anything in particular—such as mealtimes—just what the pain was like and what part of the head it involved, and whether we had had any unusual worries lately or been involved in an accident.

We have learned that such information is necessary if a doctor is to make an adequate diagnosis, and it is just as necessary for counselors. If a woman came in to ask help because of frequent and severe quarrels with her husband, she would be asked whether they had always quarreled or whether their married life had at first been a happy one; whether they quarreled about anything in particular, such as money or the children; whether she and her husband had the same general attitude toward things, or whether there was some fundamental conflict. She would be encouraged to tell her idea of what married life should be and in what way she believed that her husband did not live up to the standard that she had set for him. If she also showed some understanding of her husband's point of view, one would expect that real progress could be made. The process of explaining the trouble logically to another person will in itself make it clearer to the woman, and no advice worth giving could be formulated without the knowledge gained from answers to such questions.

One generalization that can be made in this field in which so few generalizations hold is that, when a person is confronted with another's problem, his ability to offer a simple solution, and one that he feels sure is correct, varies in inverse ratio with the amount of his knowledge of counseling. Headaches and quarrels—both can be caused by many things, singly or in combination; and snap diagnoses in either case are to be deplored.

Another indication of the superficial attitude some people take toward counseling is the opinion sometimes advanced that there is no reason for counselors to keep records. Records are as important in counseling as in medicine.

Human memory is very fallible, and important things such as symptoms and advice given should always be put down in black and white. One concrete detail that marks the professional, as contrasted with the non-professional, is that the former keeps records and the latter usually does not. A counselor has many troubled persons coming to see him, some of whom he will know off and on for years; and by sitting down every so often and carefully reviewing his written record of a situation over a period of time, he becomes aware of trends that would be brought to light in no other way.

Also, if a counselor leaves and another takes his place, the only way the latter can keep from starting all over again is to have a record of what has already been accomplished. If psychiatrists or other experts are called in for consultation at the request of the person asking help, a great deal of unnecessary repetition can be eliminated when records have been kept.

It goes without saying that the records of counselors should be kept as confidential as are medical records, and that they should be protected by law in the same manner as are a man's confessions to his physician and his priest.

Another error to avoid is the unfounded belief that a counselor can change a person at the request of a third party. Sometimes a man will ask a case worker to go right out and improve his wife's disposition, or make her treat him in a way that he would find more agreeable; more often, it is the woman who requests this miraculous transformation. If you want to *make* a person do anything after he reaches adulthood, you will have to undertake a legal process. If you have no basis for legal action, then you

may persuade him, but you cannot force him to change.

In addition, a counselor already has two strikes on him if the person whom he would like to help has been threatened with what the counselor is going to do to him. In fact, offering aid when none has been requested is pretty much a waste of time, the sole exception being children who show by their actions, rather than by words, how deep their unhappiness is. Even then, no real help can be given until the child is convinced that what is being offered him is something that will help him. At first, however, the counselor may have to persist, even though repeatedly rebuffed, until the child, to whom the whole world seems hostile, understands what the counselor wishes to do for him.

In domestic situations, it frequently happens that it is the more mature of the marriage partners who comes to the counselor. The other may be satisfied with a turbulent home life as long as he can put the blame on his spouse and does not have to undertake the painful process of growing up and accepting adult responsibilities. Seldom is the solution to be found in what will seem to the weaker person to be an attack on him. The counselor's responsibility is to the person who has asked help, aiding him to find a more satisfactory adjustment for himself. Sometimes it does happen that the partner, seeing a change in his mate and thus getting a practical demonstration of what counseling means, will then ask help for himself. What has to be accepted is the fact that the advisor cannot change the persons in an individual's environment who may annoy him any more than he can change, except in a minor way, other things in society that the man may find objectionable. Nevertheless, human relationships are the result of the interaction of

at least two personalities, and to that extent the change in one affects the other, although possibly not to a very large degree.

Mrs. Jackson came to the counselor to demand that he see her husband and bring him to his senses. Mr. Jackson's earnings were small, but when he brought all the money home, they managed to meet their expenses; since he had gone in for gambling, however, they had got themselves in debt. To Mrs. Jackson, the matter was a simple one: her husband's gambling was breaking up their home; it was up to the counselor to put a stop to it. She was very impatient with any suggestion that the solution might not be so simple as she insisted it was.

About six months later, she returned to see the counselor again. She had persuaded her mother-in-law to make a long trip to this city in order to give Mr. Jackson a lecture on his responsibilities. Their minister had talked with him, and when this did no good either, Mrs. Jackson had gone to see her husband's employer. With some defiance, she stated that she had almost cost her husband his job, and yet things were worse than ever. He was gambling more and, worst of all, he would scarcely speak to her. At this point, she began to cry as she explained that, although she did want him to stop gambling, it was much more important to her that he should not stop loving her.

Then she told her story. The Jacksons had been secretly married shortly before he returned to the state university for his senior year. A few months later she found herself pregnant, and Mr. Jackson had left school and taken a job in the local factory where he was still working. They had two

more children in quick succession. As Mrs. Jackson related this to an impartial, sympathetic listener, she reached the point where she was able to put into words two things that she had done her best to keep from admitting to herself. The first was that her husband must feel cheated out of the kind of life that he had hoped to lead and that this must lead to resentment, conscious or unconscious, toward her, as the one who had tied him down with family responsibilities. The second was that, deep within herself, Mrs. Jackson was in a panic lest she should lose her husband because of his resentment, and that she had tried to allow him as little freedom as possible so that he should not get away from her. To both of them, his gambling was important primarily as proof of the fact that he still had the power to defy her and that to this extent he was still a free man.

Now that she had it all out in the open, Mrs. Jackson could see for herself that she needed to reverse her former method of approach to the problem. Instead of constantly nagging her husband, she needed to make the home a pleasant place for him; instead of trying to tie him to her by playing on his sense of duty, which would make his family responsibilities all the more disagreeable to him, she needed to make him think of himself as somebody his wife and children trusted and respected. It was a matter of building on what was positive in the situation—his devotion to his wife and children—instead of continually fighting against the negative aspect of the family relationship.

Mr. Jackson never stopped gambling altogether, but as the pressure on him lessened, he no longer experienced the same need to prove his independence that way. More important, his wife, recognizing that he had not been ready to

settle down when he suddenly found himself a family man, no longer permitted the outlet he had found to endanger their marriage. She realized that he had inner tensions that would have to be released in some manner if he were to remain a well man, and that gambling—especially when he limited his losses—was more harmless than another outlet might be.

One other thing should be mentioned—the fallacious idea that a large number of the problems with which people struggle would evaporate if they would exert more will power. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing, if by will power is meant some magical driving force within the personality which, if let loose, overpowers all opposition. “Will power” is a term describing one function of the mind, namely, that of persuading ourselves to do the thing we believe to be the best for us in the long run, though our mood of the moment would lead us to do something else.

Suppose we make some minor error in our work, one that might easily pass unnoticed but that will take some trouble on our part to correct. Our impulse is to let it go; we are tired, and the chances are that the error will not be detected. How do we get ourselves to make the necessary effort to correct it? Perhaps we imagine our boss finding the error and coming out to reproach us publicly, and we paint such a vivid picture to ourselves of our humiliation that we have begun to repair our mistake before we even realize that we have made up our mind to do so. In this way, we have shamed ourselves into doing what we believed to be wise, going about it just as we would have in attempting to persuade someone else, except that, since we know our

own weaknesses best, we can be more sure of using effective arguments.

The degree of success we shall attain in thus managing ourselves will depend on two factors: our astuteness in conjuring up suppositions that will drive us in the right direction, and the strength of the forces in opposition. Nothing else is involved in the matter of will power. Most of us, at one time or another, have known some man or woman who, after drinking or smoking for years, suddenly decides one day to quit, and does so. Either this person has thought of a reason for stopping that holds more meaning for him than any he had previously thought of or else his desire to drink or smoke has decreased, or possibly it is a combination of the two factors; but no third force has been brought into play.

As we get to know ourselves better, our ability to manage ourselves increases at the same time that those impulses that drive us to do things we think unwise lose strength because we have come to understand their source. Thus, berating ourselves for not having more will power merely increases our inner tension to no good purpose. Instead, we should use our energy to seek an understanding of those motivating factors that send us in directions we do not wish to go.

CHAPTER XI

Conclusion

THE trouble with any educational program for prevention is that, to a certain extent, it magnifies the very problem it is attempting to solve. Thus, whenever there is a campaign relating to cancer there are always women who become convinced they are suffering from that malady, and reassurances from doctors only make them the more certain that the truth is being kept from them. So suggestible are many of us that we immediately become possessed of almost any symptom we see described in detail. There is the same danger in discussing those symptoms that should lead one to consult a counselor. Therefore, it should be stated clearly that, if you have to think very hard in order to determine whether or not you are getting satisfaction out of life, things cannot be so very bad with you.

The discussion in this book has centered mainly on those things that make life less comfortable than it otherwise would be—dissatisfactions with one's job or one's wife—but probably a little should be said about symptoms of serious inner disturbances.

The most serious of these is complete retreat from reality. The person builds a world of his own that does not appear real to any of those about him. In one sense, each of us has

his own private world, in that none of us sees things exactly the same, as anyone knows who has listened to two people describing the same event. However, if a man believes that he is somebody that nobody else thinks he is—as when he maintains that he is Julius Caesar or King Solomon, or when he believes that the whole town is mixed up in some incredible conspiracy against him, or when he complains of the deepest despondency because of having committed some great sin that he can give no details about and that nobody else thinks he has committed—then that person quite likely is in the condition we describe as “insane.”

Usually, such states prevent a man from living at peace among his fellow men, and treatment will probably require commitment to an institution. In most cases, such mental disorganizations have to be detected by the patient's friends and relatives, since, having transformed reality, the person is unable to grasp the fact that he is out of line with what other people see as the facts of life. Lack of ability to react emotionally to anything or, conversely, extreme outbursts at slight provocations may accompany these states, which are called “psychoses,” a term meaning disorder of the mind. The necessary thing to know is that this condition can be treated only by a psychiatrist, and that non-medical persons, regardless of their training or experience, are not qualified to handle problems of this nature.

Next in seriousness come the “neuroses”—or “psycho-neuroses,” as they have more recently been called—a term used to denote nervous disorders that do not have any change in nerve structure to account for them. Persons suffering from this type of disorder may have all the symptoms of a disease without any apparent organic basis for it. They

may take to their beds and be unable to walk unaided, although nothing physically wrong can be discovered; or they may have an intense fear of something that appears to their intellect quite harmless; or they may repeatedly go through some ritual that seems to serve no purpose that they can see. Indeed, there may be an endless variety of symptoms. These people are not out of touch with reality, and therefore, under expert guidance, they are capable of finding out what is wrong with themselves. The difficulty here is that their unconscious has taken control of some aspect of their life, which therefore is no longer under the control of their intellect.

Mrs. King, who had been an only child and had led a very sheltered life, took to her bed after her mother's death and, as the months passed, she was not able to get up again. When she stood upright, she had choking spells, became dizzy, and fainted. No physical cause for this could be found. With the help of an analyst, she came to realize that she had retreated in a very real way from the battle of life and had forced her husband to look after her as her mother had always done. It was not a satisfactory way out, however, even for Mrs. King, because she felt all the discomfort of her illness as keenly as she would have if she had been physically ill.

Most of us can understand this type of disorder because it represents, in an intensified form, things that are widely experienced. Many of us feel squeamish about getting near the edge of a roof top or other high platform, but unless we desire to be steeple jacks or to spend our lives climbing mountains, little harm is done. In the same way, we may go to a

reasonable amount of trouble to keep out of crowds, staying away from mass gatherings, and trying not to travel on the subway during the rush hour. However, if we become so afraid of heights that we are thrown into a panic if we have to go above the first floor of a building, or if our fear of crowds is so intense that we never leave our own yard because we want to avoid having to put up with the presence of more than two people at a time, then we may be said to be suffering from a "phobia," the term used for such extreme fears and one kind of neurosis. When our whole way of life becomes an attempt to reduce such exaggerated fears, then we need expert aid in getting to the bottom of our difficulty, so that we can begin to live normally again.

Psychoanalysis grew out of experiments in helping people with this type of disability, and analysts and psychiatrists are the only ones qualified to treat it. There is a real danger in allowing untrained persons to meddle, because it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that this sort of emotional disturbance does not just happen; it has a purpose and, to the unconscious, it seems the safest way out of a dilemma the individual is facing. It is not the symptom that needs to be tackled, but the dilemma itself.

Another illustration might make this clearer:

Mrs. Long came to the psychiatrist because of her obsession for cleanliness. She washed and washed, but she never felt clean. During the day, she scrubbed her hands every few minutes, and all night long she repeatedly got out of bed to wash them again. She had worn the skin off, but still she rubbed them hard with a strong soap.

She had had three older brothers who had married and left home at an early age, while she remained at home to

look after her widowed father, who was an invalid. The relationship was a parasitic one as far as he was concerned, and her one desperate effort to free herself—when she eloped—came to naught, because her father managed to break up the marriage. Outwardly, she was a model daughter; inwardly, she seethed with resentment. This she learned when she came to realize that her dreams contained fantasies of murdering her father. Lady Macbeth washed her hands after contriving a real murder; Mrs. Long washed hers after an imaginary one.

An attack on the symptom itself, even if successful as far as stopping the perpetual washing was concerned, could not do any lasting good. It was merely a defense against an inner drive that Mrs. Long very much needed a defense against. The chances are that she would merely have produced some other symptom that would be even more certain to block the impulse, such as becoming paralyzed.

The cure would result from a recognition on her part of both her love and her hate for her father, because she entertained both feelings, and from gaining an adult attitude toward her desire for a life of her own. Once she could understand these things that she had been hiding from herself, it would not take her long to work out a fair compromise between the life she wanted to lead and the one her father wanted her to lead. When the dammed-up resentment was drained off, the need for the hand-washing would disappear, and thus the symptom would vanish.

Other types of personality difficulty that are too involved to be treated by other than a specialist are those of sexual abnormality, alcoholism, or drug addiction. Again, of

course, there are varying degrees of seriousness. Homosexuality can be merely the temporary effect of some abnormal environment, such as prison life, and may disappear when the individual is given a chance to live normally; nor should the experimenting that many young boys engage in from time to time, when not otherwise occupied, be dignified by such a term. What gives the appearance of being alcoholism may be merely the state a person gets into who is physically very susceptible to the effects of alcohol and yet who is being constantly tempted to indulge because of the drinking habits of those with whom he associates. If, when left to his own devices, he has no desire to empty the bottle, he cannot be considered a true alcoholic.

The cause of these types of maladjustment is still a moot question. Some believe that there is an organic basis for sexual abnormality in every case, even though medical science has not reached the point where doctors are able to discover such a basis in every instance; others believe that the difficulty may arise from the fact that the person has never become reconciled to being a member of the sex to which he was born or because, as a result of early experiences, he finds it impossible to express love to a member of the opposite sex. Some think of alcoholism as primarily a physical ailment to be cured by special diets and treatments; others believe that it is usually the result of the individual's need to retreat temporarily from things he does not wish to face, such as his failures or unadmitted drives within himself. There is the same disagreement over the cause of drug addiction when it does not appear to be the result of habits formed during a critical illness requiring such medication.

These types of personal tragedies always call for a doc-

tor's help. That is not to say that non-medical counselors can be of no assistance at all, because when such persons have an understanding of the problem involved, they can help to a certain extent. They can help ease troubling factors in the person's environment perhaps, or can give him a more objective view of his failing; possibly they can help build up the person physically and give him a sense of self-respect. What no one but a psychiatrist or analyst is qualified to do, however, is to make a direct attack on the deep-seated problem and to try to probe into the hidden drives of which the individual is the victim.

Especially is this last statement true in the case of homosexuality, a condition that only a specialist should attempt to deal with. No matter how well-intentioned the untrained person may be, all too often his efforts result in merely miring the individual deeper, and it is not unknown for the would-be rescuer to be dragged in after him.

Naturally, medical advice is needed in the treatment of drug addiction because of the physical effect of taking drugs. Counselors can help, however, in improving the conditions of the patient's life, so that it seems more worth while to him, thus intensifying his desire to be cured.

Alcoholics are even more amenable to this type of influence. Some will stop drinking for years or even for life if given help with the obstacles they feel they cannot overcome, such as their unhappy home life, their deep sense of being "just no-accounts." In other cases, assistance with this kind of problem, even when the individual is positive that it will lead to his cure, has little or no effect on the desire to drink. Probably the drive came from some hidden conflict of which he had no inkling, or his wish to be cured was

not strong enough, or there was a physical basis for his need to drink.

Even if a counselor cannot cure all of these unfortunate persons who are driven by a force beyond their control, he can nevertheless often make life much less unbearable for them, and always there will be those who will suddenly find the strength to withstand their former weakness, either as a result of such help or because of medical treatment.

The important thing that a person needs to know if he suffers from one of the maladies mentioned in this chapter, or has a friend or relative who does, is that usually help can be had but that it must not be amateur help. These conditions are either medical problems, in which case a doctor's aid is necessary, or they are outward symptoms of rather deep-seated maladjustments. These symptoms may be the individual's way of preventing even more serious consequences, and that is why an expert is needed.

In short, human beings constantly have to strike a balance between what their impulses would lead them to do, what their intellect tells them is the best thing to do, and what reality will permit their doing. Until all three sides of the question are known from the point of view of the individual who is in difficulty, it is impossible to help him reach a more satisfactory compromise. Upsetting the balance he has struck is dangerous, until one is sure that one has a more constructive plan to offer in its place. Adding to the difficulty in trying to help is the fact that, usually, the individual himself cannot give the information that is needed because he himself does not know all the factors involved, since some are in the unconscious.

Although everyone should have enough knowledge of

the more serious personality disorders so as to be able to recognize the symptoms and get help early, we have been primarily concerned in this book with difficulties that are both more common and more easily controlled by the individual—such as problems arising in marriage, in the rearing of children, and in attempts to make a place for oneself in the world. People may need help at any period of life and at any age, from birth to death; and a person is made just as unhappy, if not more so, by these things as he would be by the more serious personality disorders.

Although it is not possible to prevent all ills, forethought can often lessen the amount of stress that a person would otherwise feel, and for that reason, it is well to know at what points in a life career troubles are most apt to arise.

Difficulties faced by a child can generally be laid to lack of understanding or of serene dispositions on the part of those around him. Adolescence, however, is a trying period in its own right. The urge to grow up and the fear of adult responsibilities reach their peak as the young person faces adulthood, and, in addition to these psychological conflicts, there is the physiological adjustment to be made to new glandular activity as the individual grows up physically. This is a time when the young person is apt to feel awkward and forsaken, and it may result in a strong desire to feel himself an accepted member of a group. In these normal adolescent problems, the main thing that is needed is patience on the part of those who have already passed through this stage. Most of the unpleasant traits will die away of themselves as soon as the individual gets accustomed to the adult role.

The adolescent who feels self-conscious and unappreciated

should be helped to find some activity, preferably one that other young people are engaged in, in which he can become absorbed. It does not matter whether it is athletics, collecting jazz records, or membership in young people's groups, so long as it is harmless and interests him. If this does not work or there is some constant source of conflict between the adolescent and the adults about him, in the home or in the school, then a counselor can be of help.

Another time that a person may feel insecure is when approaching marriage. This is understandable when one thinks of the seriousness of agreeing to live with another individual for the rest of one's life. A large proportion of the persons coming to a family counselor's desk are young people trying to decide whether marriage under a given set of circumstances is a wise thing. The way to prevent any last-minute panic is to look at marriage in a scientific spirit before one is submerged in the emotional turmoil that may accompany the approaching wedding day. This is the reason why education for marriage is more and more coming to be considered as a necessary part of the high-school and college curriculums. Probably up to now counseling has played its most important role in aiding couples to settle problems that arise before and after marriage. The matter of attaining sexual and emotional adjustment with one's mate is one that often calls for disinterested help.

Another difficult time of life for some people is middle age, when the process that took place in adolescence is reversed. There are certain physiological changes, and people have to face the approach of old age. Their children may be grown and setting up homes of their own. This time is much less trying for those who have kept up their interests

in various activities in addition to their home life all these years. It is sad to think that any mature person should have hours on his hands that he does not know how to fill, when one thinks of all the thousands of things that need to be done in the world. A person facing this type of thing needs a hobby—music or gardening, bee culture or collecting, it does not matter what. Since it is difficult to pick up a new hobby at this period of life, everyone should maintain an interest in a variety of things during his entire life.

If, in spite of an effort to arouse his interest in living, a person is unsuccessful, then he should seek help. It sometimes happens that inner tensions that were scarcely noticed while a man was busily engaged in pursuits demanding all of his attention become more annoying when the pace slackens and he has time to consider himself in relation to the world about him. Never is it too late to gain self-knowledge and put its fruits to good use. In the same manner, a major upheaval in a man's life—an economic disaster or an emotional loss—may make weaknesses in his way of living that had previously passed unnoticed stand forth clearly. The intelligent step to take is to do something about these weak spots if they are decreasing his ability to make the most of life.

Thus, by intelligent planning, we can keep to a minimum the force of expected blows from fate, and when we are in trouble, we can be sure that there are many about us anxious to help. What we have to know is what type of aid we want and where it is to be found.

Just as the sick person knows that medicine can offer him some relief and sometimes a cure, so the person weighed down by burdens that are too heavy for him to carry alone

can also secure aid. Counselors everywhere, regardless of the name under which they are known and the auspices under which they work, be they psychiatrists or social workers, doctors or ministers, or others interested in this field—all stand ready to help.

Bibliography

A Handbook for Husbands and Wives, by Theodore Z. Arden
(New York: Association Press, 1939), 35c.

A frank discussion of the problem of sex adjustment in marriage. This pamphlet would be particularly useful to those about to be married or to the newly wed.

A Mind that Found Itself. An Autobiography, by Clifford Whittingham Beers (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1935), \$2.

Written by a man who regained his sanity after spending some time in a mental hospital, this book is especially interesting because of the influence it had on the development of the mental-hygiene movement in the United States.

The Art of Counseling. How to Gain and Give Mental Health, by Rollo May (Nashville, Tennessee: Cokesbury Press, 1939), \$2.

The author has written in non-technical language a practical book on counseling. It is meant primarily for those dealing with the problems of young people.

Mental Hygiene in the Community, by Clara Bassett (New York: Macmillan, 1934), \$3.50.

A comprehensive study of the part mental hygiene plays in the various fields of community life, such as medicine, social service, religion, industry, and so on.

Our Children, edited by Dorothy Canfield Fisher and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg (New York: Viking Press, 1932), \$2.75.

Edited for the Child Study Association of America. Experts in various fields write on many aspects of a child's development in the home, school, and community.

Personal Problems of Everyday Life, by Lee Edward Travis and Dorothy Walter Baruch (New York: Appleton-Century, 1941), \$2.75.

A professor of psychology and a professor of education have joined forces to write a helpful book about common problems and what to do about them.

Practical Aspects of Psychoanalysis, by Lawrence S. Kubie (New York: Norton, 1936), \$2.

A handbook on psychoanalysis, giving much helpful information about the practical aspects of the subject.

Readings in Mental Hygiene, edited by Ernest R. Groves and Phyllis Blanchard (New York: Henry Holt, 1936), \$2.75.

The editors have reprinted here many useful articles by various specialists, all the material dealing with the development and use of modern psychological principles in numerous phases of modern life.

So You're Going to a Psychiatrist, by Elizabeth I. Adamson (New York: Crowell, 1936), \$2.50.

A sound discussion of modern psychiatric thought, written for the layman. It should increase the insight of any reader.

Solving Personal Problems. A Counseling Manual, by Harrison Sacket Elliott and Grace Loucks Elliott (New York: Holt, 1936), \$2.

A description of the personality factors leading to unhappiness. This book would be useful both to counselors and to those in trouble.

To Drink or Not to Drink, by Charles H. Durfee (New York: Longmans, Green, 1937), \$2.

The author discusses "problem drinkers," those who drink because of maladjustment to life, and explains his method of cure.

Understanding Ourselves, by Ernest R. Groves (New York: Emerson Books, 1941), \$2.

A simply written book on the development of personality. It can be read with profit by all who wish a better understanding of themselves or others.

Wholesome Childhood, by Ernest R. Groves and Gladys H. Groves (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), \$1.75.

A manual on the rearing of children, helpful to any person wishing sound information on how to give a child the foundation for a normal, happy life.

Your Experiment in Living, by Michael A. Cassidy and Helen Gay Pratt (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939), \$1.75.

The author writes for adolescents, answering in a sensible way the many questions that concern young people today.

Appendix

The following are some of the national professional organizations to which family counselors in the various fields frequently belong:

American Association of Applied Psychology, C. M. Louttit, Secretary, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

American Association of Medical Social Workers, 844 Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois.

American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, 1790 Broadway, New York, New York.

American Association of Social Workers, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, New York.

American Association of Visiting Teachers, Madison Public Schools, Madison, New Jersey.

American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.

American Orthopsychiatric Association, 149 East 73rd Street, New York, New York.

American Psychiatric Association, 2 East 103rd Street, New York, New York.

American Psychoanalytic Society, 7 East 81st Street, New York, New York.

American Psychological Association, Willard Olsen, Secretary, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

American Social Hygiene Association, 50 West 50th Street, New York, New York.

Church Conference of Social Work, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, New York.

Conference on Conservation of Marriage and the Family, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Family Welfare Association of America, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, New York.

National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 50 West 50th Street, New York, New York.

National Conference of Catholic Charities, 1317 F Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, 67 West 47th Street, New York, New York.

National Conference of Social Work, 82 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio.

National Conference on Family Relations, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois.





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